Think Well on't;

OR,

REFLECTIONS

ON THE

GREAT TRUTHS

OF THE

CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

For every Day in the Month.

The THIRD EDITION Corrected.

LONDON:

Printed for THOMAS MEIGHAN, in *Drury-Lane*. MDCCXXXVI.

1606/1697.

DIRECTIONS for the Uſe of the following CONSIDERATIONS.

1. *MAKE Choice of a proper Time and Place for Recollection; and ſhut the Door of thy Heart as much as poſſible againſt the World, and its diſtracting Cares and Affections.*
2. *Place thyſelf in the Preſence of thy God, repreſenting him to thyſelf by a lively Faith, as filling Heaven and Earth with his incomprehenſible Majeſty, or as reſiding with all his Attributes in the very Center of thy own Soul. Proſtrate thyſelf in Spirit before him, to adore this Soveraign Lord; make an Offering of thy whole ſelf unto him; and humbly beg Pardon for all thy paſt Treaſons againſt him.*
3. *Implore with Fervour and Humility his Light and Grace, that the great Truths of the Goſpel may make a due Impreſſion upon thy Soul; that thou may'ſt effectually learn to fear him, and to love him.*
4. *Read leiſurely, and with ſerious Attention, the Chapter for the Day: Give thy Soul Time to digeſt what thou art reading; and pauſe more particularly on thoſe Points which affect thee moſt.*

5. *That thy Reading may partake the more of the Nature of mental Prayer, ſtrive to draw from thy Conſiderations ſuch Affections as are ſuitable to the Subject, by ſtirring up, for Example, in thy Soul the Fear and Love of God; a Confidence in his Goodneſs; a Senſe of Gratitude for his Benefits; the Horror of Sin; a ſincere Repentance for thy own paſt Sins, and ſuch like: Open thy Heart as much as thou canſt to theſe Affections, that ſo theſe great and neceſſary Virtues may take the deeper Root there.*

6. *Conclude thy Conſiderations with holy Reſolutions of Amendment of Life, inſiſting in particular on the Failings to which thou art moſt ſubject; and firmly determine with thyſelf to begin to put theſe Reſolutions in Execution, upon ſuch Occaſions as may occur that very Day.*

7. *Often reflect in the Day-time on the chief Points of thy Conſideration; leſt the Enemy rob thy Soul of this divine Seed, by making thee quickly forget what thou haſt been reading and conſidering.*

Think

Think Well on't;

OR,

REFLECTIONS

ON

The GREAT TRUTHS of the *Chriſtian Religion.*

CHAP. I.

On the Neceſſity of Conſideration.

The Firſt DAY.

CONSIDER, *1ſt*, Thoſe Words of the Prophet *Jeremias*, *With Deſolation is the whole Earth laid deſolate, becauſe there is no one who thinks in his Heart*; *Jerem.* 12. v. 11. And reflect how true it is, that the Want

of *Conſideration* on the great Truths of Chriſtianity, is the chief Source of all our Evils. Alas! The greateſt Part of Men ſeldom or never think either of their firſt Beginning, or laſt End: They neither conſider who brought them into the World, nor for what; nor reflect on that Eternity, into which they are juſt about to ſtep. Hence all their Purſuits are earthly and temporal, as if they were only made for this Life, or were to be always here. Death, Judgment, Heaven, and Hell, make but little Impreſſion upon them, becauſe they don't give them Leiſure to ſink deep into their Souls by the Means of ſerious *Conſideration.* They run on with their Eyes ſhut to the Precipice of a miſerable Eternity, and only then begin to think, when they find themſelves lodg'd in that Place of Woe, where *their Worm ſhall never die, and their Fire ſhall never be quench'd.* Ah! my poor Soul, take care that this be not thy Caſe!

Conſider, 2*dly*, That we cannot be ſaved without *knowing* God, *and loving* him above all Things. Now we can neither *know* him, nor *love* him as we ought,

ought, without the Help of *Conſideration.* 'Tis this which diſcovers to us the infinite Perfections of this *ſoveraign Being*; his charming Beauty; his eternal Love for us, and all the Benefits which he has beſtowed upon us his moſt undeſerving and ungrateful Creatures: All which, alas! make no Impreſſion on us without ſerious *Conſideration.* All Things that are about us, the Heavens, the Earth, and every Creature therein, ceaſe not to preach God unto us, and invite us to love him: But without *Conſideration* we are deaf to this Voice of the whole Creation; we are like thoſe that have Eyes, and ſee not; that have Ears, and hear not. Ah! the great and dreadful Miſchiefs that follow from the Want of that true Knowledge of God, which is the Fruit of daily *Conſideration!* Is it not upon this Account that the whole World is over-run with Wickedneſs? and that Hell opens wide its Jaws, devouring without End or Number the unhappy Children of *Adam*, becauſe God is forgot, *becauſe there is no Knowledge of God upon Earth?* Oſea 4. v. 1.

Conſider, 3*dly*, That to ſave our Souls we muſt alſo know ourſelves: We muſt know our Miſery and Corruption, that we may be humble, and diffide in ourſelves; we muſt know our irregular Inclinations and Paſſions, that we may fight againſt them, and overcome them; we muſt ſtudy and watch the Motions of our own Hearts, that we may not be ſurpriſed by Sin, and ſleep in Death. And how can this all neceſſary Knowledge of ourſelves, this Science of the Saints, be acquired without the Help of daily *Conſideration?* Ah! how unhappy are they who know all Things elſe, and are Strangers to themſelves! Let us then daily pray with St. *Auguſtin*, *Noverim te*, *noverim me*; Lord give me Grace to know thee, Lord give me Grace to know myſelf: And let us labour for theſe two moſt neceſſary Sciences by frequent *Conſideration*.

Conſider, 4*thly*, That in order to nouriſh in our Souls the wholſome Fear of God, which is the Beginning of true Wiſdom, and ſpur ourſelves on in the Way of Virtue, we muſt alſo ſeriouſly reflect on the Enormity of Sin, and the

the Hatred God bears unto it; on the dreadful Effects of Sin in the Soul, and on the Multitude of our own Sins in particular; on the Vanity, Misery, and Deceitfulness of the World; on the Comfort and Happiness that attends a virtuous Life; on the Shortness of Time, and the dreadful Length of a miserable Eternity; on the Certainty and Uncertainty of Death, and the Sentiments we shall have when we come to die; on the small Number of the Elect, *&c.* Ah, Christians, let us not neglect this great Means of Salvation! 'Twas the *Consideration* of these Truths that has made so many Saints; that has so often reclaimed even the most abandon'd Sinners. O! what a profound Lethargy must that Soul be in, which is not rouzed at the Thunder of those dreadful Truths, Death, Judgment, Hell, Eternity!

Consider, 5*thly*, The bitter but fruitless Repentance of the Damn'd, condemning their past Folly, in having thought so little on those Things on which they shall now think for all Eternity. Senseless Wretches as we were!

we had once our Time, when, by thinking upon this miſerable Eternity, we might have eſcaped it. Thoſe endleſs Joys of Heaven were offered us at a cheap Rate, when a little Reflection on them might have put us in the Way of ſecuring to ourſelves the everlaſting Poſſeſſion of them. But, alas! we would not think then; and now 'tis too late. O my Soul, learn thou to be wiſe by their Misfortune: Reflect in this thy Day, on the Things that appertain to thy eternal Peace; think well on thy laſt End; meditate on the great Truths of the Goſpel. Thou muſt either think of them now, or hereafter, when the Thought of them will only ſerve to aggravate thy Miſery for all Eternity.

CHAP. II.

On the End of our Creation.

The Second DAY.

CONSIDER, *1ſt*, Chriſtian Soul, that ſo many Years ago, thou waſt

waſt not yet come into the World, and that thy Being was a mere Nothing. The World had laſted near upon ſix thouſand Years, with innumerable Tranſactions and Revolutions in every Nation, and where waſt thou all that while? Alas! Thou waſt ingulfed in the deep Abyſs of Nothing, infinitely beneath the Condition of the meaneſt Creature upon Earth; and what could'ſt thou do remaining there? Learn then to humble thyſelf, whatever Advantages thou may'ſt enjoy of Nature or Grace, ſince of thyſelf thou art Nothing; and all that thou haſt above Nothing has been given or lent thee by thy Maker. Ah! poor Wretch, what haſt thou to be proud of? Or what canſt thou call *thy own*, but Nothing, and Sin, which is worſe than Nothing?

Conſider, 2*dly*, That the Almighty Hand of God, deſcending into that deep Abyſs of Nothing, has drawn thee forth from thence, and given thee this Being which thou now enjoyeſt, the moſt accompliſh'd and perfect of any in this viſible World, capable of knowing and loving God in this Life, and deſign'd

for an everlaſting Happineſs with him in the next. Admire and adore the Bounty of thy God, who from all Eternity has deſign'd this Being for thee, preferably to ſo many Millions of others which he has left behind, that had as fair a Title to a Being as thou hadſt. Look forward into that immenſe Eternity for which thou haſt been created, and thankfully acknowledge, that the Love thy God bears thee has neither Beginning nor End, but reaches from Eternity to Eternity.

Conſider, 3*dly*, That being created by Almighty God, and having received thy whole Being from him, by the juſteſt of all Titles thou belongeſt to him; and art obliged to conſecrate to his Service all thy Powers, Faculties, and Senſes; and art guilty of a moſt crying Injuſtice, as often as thou abuſeſt any Part of thy Being, by employing it in the Purſuit of Vanity and Sin. Ah! my poor Soul, how little have we hitherto thought of this? How ſmall a Part of our Thoughts, Words, and Deeds, has been referred to him who is our firſt Beginning, and therefore ought to be the laſt End of all our Actions?

Be confounded at ſo great an Abuſe; repent and amend.

Conſider, 4*thly*, That God, who gave thee thy Being, and who created all Things elſe in this viſible World for thy Service, has created thee for himſelf alone. Not that he ſtood in need of thee, or can receive from thee any Increaſe or Addition to his Happineſs; but that he might give thee his Grace in this Life, and the endleſs Joys of his Kingdom in the next. Stand aſtoniſh'd, Chriſtian Soul, at the Bounty of thy Creator, in making thee for ſo noble an End; and ſince thou waſt made for God, be aſhamed to content thyſelf with any Thing leſs than God: Learn then to contemn all that is Earthly and Temporal, as Things beneath thee, and unworthy of thy Affection. Lament thy paſt Folly, and that of the far greateſt Part of Mankind, who ſpend their Days in vain Amuſements, in reſtleſs Cares, about painted Toys and mere Trifles; and ſeldom or never think of that great End, for which alone they came into this World.

Conſider, 5*thly*, That all the Powers and Faculties of thy Soul, thy Will, thy Memory, thy Underſtanding, and all the Senſes and Parts of thy Body, were all given by thy Creator, as ſo many Means to attain to this End of thy Creation, to be employ'd during thy ſhort Abode in this tranſitory Life, in the Service of thy God, and ſo to bring thee to the eternal Enjoyment of him in the ſweet Repoſe of his bleſſed Kingdom. Alas! my Soul, have we not perverted all theſe Gifts of our Maker, in turning them all againſt the Giver? Have Mercy on us, O Lord, have Mercy on us; pardon our paſt Treaſons, and give us Grace now to begin to be wiſe for Eternity.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

On the Benefits of GOD.

The Third DAY.

CONSIDER, *1ſt*, My Soul, how many and how great are thy Obligations to the Bounty of thy God. He has thought of thee from all Eternity; he has loved thee from all Eternity: All thoſe Bleſſings and Favours, which he has beſtowed upon thee in Time, he deſigned for thee from all Eternity: They are all the Conſequences of his eternal Love for thee. Is it poſſible that ſo great a God, the moſt High, and the moſt Holy, who dwells in Eternity, ſhould ſet his Affections upon ſuch a poor ſinful Worm of the Earth! Is it poſſible, my Soul, that thou ſhouldſt have had a Place from all Eternity in the Heart of thy God; and that this eternal Mind ſhould never have been one Moment without thinking on thee! Ah! poor Wretch, what Return haſt thou

thou made for this ancient Love? How late haſt thou loved him, who has loved thee from all Eternity? How little haſt thou thought of him, who always thinks on thee?

Conſider, 2*dly*, That thy God has not only given thee by *Creation* thy Soul and Body, with all their Powers and Faculties, and, in a word, whatever thou haſt, and whatever thou art; but alſo preſerves them each Moment by the Benefit of *Conſervation*, which may be call'd a *continual Creation*. For as nothing but his Almighty Hand could give thee this Being, ſo none but he could preſerve thee from falling back into thy former Nothing; which muſt infallibly have happened to thee, if thy God had but for one Moment withdrawn his ſupporting Hand. Poor Sinner! why didſt thou not think of this, when by thy repeated Crimes thou waſt waging War with thy God; and he with incomparable Love was Night and Day watching over thee? How didſt thou dare preſume ſo often and for ſo long a time to provoke him, who held the Thread of thy Life in his Hand, and who

who every Moment could have cruſh'd thee into Nothing, or caſt thee headlong into Hell? O! Bleſſed by all Creatures be his Mercy for ever, for having borne with thee ſo long.

Conſider, 3*dly*, The ineſtimable Benefit of our Redemption, by which our loving God has reſcued us from Sin, and from Hell the juſt Reward of Sin. Alas! my poor Soul, we muſt have been loſt for ever, had not this ſoveraign Maker and Lord of Heaven and Earth loved us to that Degree, as to deliver himſelf up to the moſt cruel and ignominious Death of the Croſs for our Redemption. *Greater Love than this no Man hath, that one lay down his Life for his Friend*; St. *John* 15. v. 13. But, O dear Lord, thou haſt carried thy Love much farther than this, in dying for thoſe who by Sin were thy declared Enemies; in dying for ſuch ungrateful Wretches, as would ſcarce ever thank thee for thy Love, and ſeldom or never ſo much as pity thy Sufferings, or take any notice of them. Ah! Chriſtians, what ſhall we moſt admire, to ſee this great Monarch

of

of Heaven and Earth (in compariſon with whom the whole Creation is juſt nothing, or rather leſs than nothing) expiring on a Croſs for ſuch deſpicable Worms as we are? or to ſee thoſe, who believe this amazing Truth, take ſo little notice of this immenſe Love, which will be a juſt Subject of Aſtoniſhment to Men and Angels for all Eternity?

Conſider, 4*thly*, How much we owe to God for having call'd us to the true Faith, preferably to ſo many Millions, whom he has left behind in Darkneſs and the Shades of Death. Alas! poor Souls, how deplorable is their Condition, void as they are of the Knowledge of *Jeſus Chriſt*, or of his only Spouſe the true Catholick Church! How little do they think of God, or of the Life to come! With how little Apprehenſion or Remorſe do they run on from Sin to Sin, and die impenitent! Ah! the Goodneſs of God, that has not ſuffered us to fall into ſuch Miſery, tho' born and bred up amidſt a People ſeduced by Error! or, if we have alſo had the Misfortune, like

our

our Neighbours, to have gone aſtray from the Womb, has by a more diſtinguiſhing Mercy drawn us out of the Dragon's Jaws, and brought us to his Fold, the Catholick Church! Bleſſed be our God for ever for all his Mercies. O! what an ineſtimable Happineſs it is, to have, by the Means of this Grace of Vocation, God himſelf for our Father, and his Holy Church for our Mother! To paſs this tranſitory Life in the happy Society of the only Spouſe of God's only Son! to be daily Partakers of the Sacraments, thoſe heavenly Conduits of divine Grace! to live and die in the Communion of the Saints, *&c.* Ah! *Bleſſed is the People who have the Lord for their God*; Pſ. 143.

Conſider, 5*thly*, Chriſtian Soul, whoever thou art, the particular Providence of God towards thee: With how many Graces he has prevented thee from thy tender Years: From how many Misfortunes he has preſerved thee. Has he not borne with thee for a long time, whilſt others have been cut off in their Sins? Are there not Millions now burning in Hell for leſſer Sins than

than thou haſt committed? Reflect on the Advantages thou haſt received above Thouſands: What Conveniences of Life, what Friends, what Health, *&c.* whilſt ſo many, more worthy than thyſelf, have been abandon'd to Poverty and Miſery. Ah! admire the unſpeakable Goodneſs of thy God to thee: Be aſtoniſh'd and confounded at thy paſt Ingratitude: Reſolve from henceforth never to ceaſe giving him Thanks, and bleſſing his Name.

CHAP. IV.

On the Dignity and Obligations of a Chriſtian.

The Fourth DAY.

CONSIDER, *1ſt*, That every Chriſtian by Nature, and inaſmuch as he is a Man, is the moſt perfect of all viſible Creatures, endowed with Underſtanding and Reaſon; compoſed of a Body whoſe Structure

Structure is admirable, and of a ſpiritual and immortal Soul, created to the Image and Likeneſs of God, and capable of the eternal Enjoyment of him; inriched with a Free-will, and advanced by his Creator to the Dignity of Lord and Maſter of all other Creatures; tho' not deſigned to meet with his Happineſs in any of them, but in the Creator alone. Ah! my Soul, haſt thou hitherto been ſenſible of the Dignity of thy Nature? Haſt thou not too often, like brute Beaſts, looked no farther than this Earth; that is, theſe preſent material and ſenſible Things? Haſt thou not too often made thyſelf a Slave to Creatures, which were only made to ſerve thee?

Conſider, 2*dly*, That every Chriſtian by Grace, and inaſmuch as he is a Chriſtian, has been by the Sacrament of Baptiſm advanced to the Participation of the Divine Nature, and made the adopted Child of God, Heir of God, and Co-heir with *Chriſt*. He has been made the Temple of the moſt High, conſecrated by the ſprinkling of the Blood of *Chriſt*, and the Unction of his Grace; and has received at the ſame time

time an unqueſtionable Right and Title to an everlaſting Kingdom. O! Chriſtian Soul, didſt thou ever yet entertain a ſerious Thought of the Greatneſs of this Dignity to which thou haſt been raiſed at thy Baptiſm? How has thy Life correſponded to this Dignity? O Child of Heaven, how long wilt thou be a Slave to the Earth?

Conſider, 3*dly*, That as the Dignity of a Chriſtian is very great, ſo alſo the Obligations that attend this Dignity are greater than the Generality of Chriſtians imagine. Theſe Obligations are in ſhort comprized in our Baptiſmal Engagements. The firſt Condition, upon which we were by Baptiſm adopted into God's Family, was that of *Faith*. The Miniſter of *Chriſt* examined us at the Font upon every Article of our Belief; and to each Interrogation we anſwer'd by the Mouths of our Godfathers and Godmothers, *Credo*, *I do believe*. What has thy Faith been, O my Soul? Has it been conformable to this thy Profeſſion? Has it been *Firm* without wavering? Has it been *Generous*, ſo as not to be aſhamed of the Doctrine of thy

thy heavenly Maſter, or the Maxims of his Goſpel? Has it ſhewed itſelf in thy Actions? Or haſt thou not been of the Number of thoſe whoſe Life gives the Lie to their Faith? of whom the Apoſtle complains, *Tit.* 1. *Who make Profeſſion of knowing God, but deny him by their Works.*

Conſider, 4thly, That at our Baptiſm we made a ſolemn Renunciation of *the Devil,* and *all his Works,* and *all his Pomps.* Have we ever ſeriouſly reflected upon this Renunciation? Or do we rightly underſtand the Obligations of it? And yet our Title to the Inheritance of our heavenly Father is forfeited in the Moment that we are falſe to this ſacred Engagement. Ah! my Soul, if thou haſt renounced Satan, take Care that in the Practice of thy Life thou keep far from him: Take Care thou be no longer his Slave by Sin. Fly from all *his Works,* the Works of Darkneſs: Let him henceforth find nothing in thee, that he may claim for his own, and by Means of which he may alſo lay Claim to thee. Deſpiſe his vain *Pomps,* the falſe Appearances of worldly Grandeur,

Grandeur, the Prodigality, Vanity, and ſinful Divertiſements, by which he cheats poor Worldlings into his Nets: And, if at any time thou art invited to take Part in theſe Fooleries, repeat to thyſelf thoſe Words of St. *Auguſtin*, *What haſt thou to do with the Pomps of the Devil, which thou haſt renounced?*

Conſider, 5*thly*, That at Baptiſm each one of us, according to the ancient Ceremony of the Catholick Church, was clothed with a white Garment, which the Miniſter of *Chriſt* gave us with theſe Words: *Receive this white Garment, which thou ſhalt carry without Spot or Stain before the Judgment-ſeat of* Chriſt. Happy Souls, that comply with this Obligation! What a Comfort will it be to them in Life, what a Joy and Satisfaction in Death, to have kept this Robe of Innocence undefiled! But, O! Baptiſmal Innocence, where ſhall we find thee in this unhappy Age? O! Blindneſs and Stupidity of the Children of *Adam*, that part ſo eaſily with ſuch an ineſtimable Treaſure. Alas! my poor Soul, has it not been thy Misfortune? O make haſte to waſh away, with

with penitential Tears, thoſe dreadful Stains of Sin, which otherwiſe muſt be the eternal Fuel of Hell's mercileſs Flames.

CHAP. V.

On the Vanity of the World.

The Fifth DAY.

CONSIDER, *1ſt*, Thoſe Words of the wiſeſt of Men, *Eccleſ.* 1. *Vanity of Vanities, and all is Vanity:* And reflect how truly *vain* are all thoſe Things which deluded Worldlings ſeek with ſo much Eagerneſs. Honours, Riches, and worldly Pleaſures, are all but painted Bubbles, which look at a diſtance as if they were ſomething, but have nothing of real Subſtance in them; and, inſtead of a ſolid Content and Joy, bring nothing with them but a trifling Satisfaction of a Moment, follow'd with

Cares, Uneaſineſs, Apprehenſions, and Remorſe. Ah! Bubbles indeed, which their Admirers no ſooner offer to lay hold on, but they diſſolve into Air, and leave their Hands empty! O! how juſtly were all worldly Enjoyments by the Royal Prophet liken'd to a Dream? *Dormierunt ſomnum ſuum, & nihil invenerunt omnes viri Divitiarum in manibus ſuis*; Pſalm 75. They have ſlept out their ſhort Sleep, and when they wake they find nothing in their Hands of all thoſe Things, which in their Dream they ſeemed to poſſeſs. *O! ye Sons of Men, how long will you be in Love with Vanity, and run after Lies?* Pſal. 4.

Conſider, 2*dly*, That Saying of St. *Auguſtin*, L. 1. Confeſ. C. 1. *Thou haſt made us, O Lord, for thyſelf; and our Hearts cannot reſt till they reſt in thee:* And reflect, that our great Creator has given us a noble Soul, made to his own Image, and, like him, Spiritual and Immortal; which therefore can never find its Happineſs in earthly and fading Things. No, my Soul, thou haſt an Underſtanding and Will capable of contemplating on the ſoveraign Beauty and

ſoveraign

ſoveraign Truth, and of enjoying the one ſupreme infinite Good; and whatever is leſs than him, is not worthy of thee. Ah! reſolve then no longer to tire thyſelf, and waſte away thy Spirits, in running like a Child after theſe Butterflies: But ſince thou can'ſt not be without ſeeking for Happineſs, ſeek it in God's Name where it is to be found, that is, in the Way of Virtue and Devotion, and not in the By-paths which lead to endleſs Miſery.

Conſider, 3*dly*, The Shortneſs of all worldly Enjoyments. Man's Days are very ſhort: The longeſt Life is leſs than one Moment, if compared with Eternity. *A thouſand Years in the Sight of God*, that is, in the very Truth, *are but as Yeſterday that is paſt and gone*, *Pſal.* 89. Alas! does not daily Experience ſhew us, that we are here To-day, and gone To-morrow; and no ſooner out of Sight, but out of Mind too? For as ſoon as we are in the Grave, thoſe that we leave behind think no more of us. *All Fleſh is Graſs*, ſays the Prophet *Iſaiah*, ch. 40. *and all the Glory*

of it is but like that of the Flower of the Field. And what is that, but flouriſhing in the Morning, and fading in the Evening? O! how truly is our Life liken'd by St. *James*, ch. 4. to a Vapour, or a thin Smoak, which is diſpers'd by the firſt Puff of Wind, and we ſee no more of it? How juſtly is it compared by *Solomon*, *Wiſdom*, ch. 5. to a Shadow, or to the paſſing of a Bird upon the Wing, or an Arrow from the Bow, which leaves no Mark behind it? Ah! How vain it is to ſet our Hearts upon what we muſt leave ſo ſoon!

Conſider, 5*thly*, What is now become of all thoſe great ones of this World, thoſe mighty Monarchs, thoſe gallant Generals, thoſe wiſe Stateſmen, thoſe celebrated Beauties, *&c.* which made ſuch a Figure an hundred Years ago? Alas! they are all long ſince dead and gone; and now few or none ever think of them, or ſcarce know there ever were any ſuch Perſons: Juſt ſo will it be with us a few Years hence. Ah! Worldlings give Ear for one Moment to thoſe that are gone before you, who, from their

ſilent

ſilent Monuments, where the Remainder of their Duſt lies mingled with the common Earth, call upon you in the Words of the wiſe Man; *Memento judicii mei; ſic enim erit & tuum: mihi heri, tibi hodie*; Eccleſ. 38. Remember what we are to come to; it will ſoon be the ſame with you: It was our Turn Yeſterday, it will be yours To-day. We once had our Parts to act upon the Stage of the World; we once were young, ſtrong and healthy, as you are now, and thought as little as you of what we are now come to: Like you, we ſet our Hearts upon thoſe Trifles and Toys, that we could but enjoy for a Moment; and for theſe we neglected Eternity. Senſeleſs Wretches as we were, we choſe rather to be Slaves to a cheating World, to unconſtant periſhable Creatures, which abandon'd us ſo ſoon, than to ſerve that Lord and Maſter to whom nothing dies; and who neither in Life nor Death ever forſakes thoſe that forſake not him. O! Chriſtians, let us take this Warning: Let the Miſcarriages of ſo many others teach us to be wiſe: Let us not ſet our Hearts on this

miſerable World; nor look upon any Thing truly great, but that which is Eternal.

CHAP. VI.

On the Happineſs of ſerving GOD.

The Sixth DAY.

CONSIDER, *1ſt*, Thoſe Words of the Prophet *Iſaiah*, *Say to the juſt Man, It is well*, Iſai. 3. And reflect on the manifold Advantages which this ſhort Word *well* comprizes and enſures to the Juſt, both for Time and Eternity. Honour, Riches, and Pleaſure are the Things on which the World ſets the greateſt Value: But they are not be found where the World ſeeks them, but only in the Service of God. Can any Honour upon Earth be comparable to that of being a Servant, a Friend, an adopted Son of the great King of Heaven? Such a Soul is far more dignified in the Eyes of God and his

his Angels, than the greateſt Emperor in the Univerſe. She is a Child of the eternal Father, a Spouſe of the eternal Son, a Temple of the eternal Spirit; Heireſs to the Kingdom of Heaven, and Siſter and Companion to the Angels. O! my Soul, let ſuch Honours as theſe be the only Objects of thy Ambition.

Conſider, 2*dly*, That the trueſt Riches are to be found in the Service of God; not indeed always thoſe worldly Poſſeſſions, which are attended with ſo many Cares and Fears; which are daily expoſed to ſo many Accidents; and which are not capable of ſatisfying the Heart: But the ineſtimable Treaſure of the Grace of God, which is the Seed of everlaſting Glory; the Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt; the Love of God; in a word, God himſelf; whom the whole World cannot take from the Soul, unleſs ſhe be ſo miſerably blind as to drive him away by mortal Sin. Add to this the fatherly Providence of God over the Juſt; that his Eyes are always upon them to take Care of their Welfare:

That

That his Angels always encamp about them to guard them by Night and by Day, *Pſ.* 33. v. 8. That as he formerly ſaid to *Abraham*, *Gen.* 15. *He himſelf is their Protector, and their Reward exceeding great.* He is their Friend, and the beſt of Friends; the Shepherd of their Souls, who leads them out to his admirable Paſtures, to the Fountains of living Water. His Tenderneſs towards them is beyond that of a Father, nay beyond that of the tendereſt Mother, *Iſai.* 49. v. 15, 16. In ſhort, God is all Things to thoſe that fear him. O! my Soul, ſeek no other Treaſure than him. Fear nothing but the loſing him. If thou haſt him, nothing can make thee miſerable; but without him nothing can make thee happy.

Conſider, 3*dly*, The Pleaſures that attend a virtuous Life; the Satisfaction, Peace, and Joy of a good Conſcience, which by the wiſe Man is liken'd to a continual Banquet; the Conſolations of the Holy Ghoſt; the comfortable Expectation of a happy Eternity after our Exit out of this Vale of Tears; a holy Confidence in the Protection and

and Providence of God, and a perfect Conformity in all Things to his bleſſed Will. From theſe Fountains flow ſuch Delights, as cannot be conceived by Worldlings who have no Experience of them; Pleaſures pure and ſpiritual, which ſweeten all the Croſſes of this Life, are an unſpeakable Comfort in Death, and carry with them a certain Foretaſte of the immortal Joys of Heaven. Whereas all worldly Pleaſures, like the World itſelf, are falſe and deceitful, always beſprinkled with ſomething of Bitterneſs; and attended with Uneaſineſs, followed with Remorſe, and end at laſt in eternal Sorrow.

Conſider, 4*thly*, That Saying of our Saviour, *One Thing is neceſſary*; *Luke* 10. v. 42. And what is that one Thing, O my Soul, which alone can make thee happy, both here and hereafter? It is to ſerve thy God; and to provide in earneſt for Eternity. All Time compar'd to Eternity is leſs than nothing. So are all temporal Concerns, if compared with the Concern of Eternity. This in reality is thy only Buſineſs: If thou takeſt Care of this, all is well; if thou neglect this,

this, all is loſt, and loſt for ever. As for all other Things of which thou may'ſt ſtand in need in this Life, give Ear again to the ſame Saviour, *Mat.* 6. v. 33. *Seek firſt the Kingdom of God and his Juſtice, and all theſe Things ſhall be given you over and above.* Conclude then, my Soul, ſince both thy temporal and eternal Welfare depends on ſerving God, to make this for the future thy only Care. Thus only ſhalt thou meet with true Comfort here: Thus only ſhalt thou come to never-ending Happineſs hereafter.

CHAP. VII.

On DEATH.

The Seventh DAY.

CONSIDER, *1ſt*, That there is nothing more certain than Death. *It is appointed for* all *Men once to die: And, after that, Judgment.* The Sentence

tence is general, 'tis pronounced upon all the Children of *Adam*; neither Wealth, nor Strength, nor Wiſdom, nor all the Power of this World, can exempt any one from this common Doom. From the firſt Moment of our Birth we are haſtening to our Death: Every Moment brings it nigher to us. The Day will come, it will certainly come, and only God knows how ſoon, when we ſhall never ſee the Night. Or the Night will come, when we ſhall never ſee the enſuing Morning: The Day will moſt certainly come, when thou, my Soul, muſt bid a long Farewell to this cheating World, and all that thou haſt admired therein; and even to thy own Body, the individual Companion of thy Life; and take thy Journey to another Country, where all, that thou ſetteſt a Value upon here, will appear as Smoak: Learn then to deſpiſe this miſerable World, and all its Enjoyments, with which thou muſt part ſo ſoon, whether thou wilt or no.

Conſider, 2*dly*, That as nothing is more certain and inevitable than Death, ſo nothing is more uncertain than the Time,

Time, the Place, the Manner, and all other Circumſtances of our Death. " O " my Soul, ſays St. *Francis Sales*, thou " muſt one Day part with this Body: " But when ſhall that Day be? Shall it " be in Winter, or in Summer? In the " City, or in the Country? By Day, " or by Night? Shall it be ſuddenly, or " on Notice given thee? Shalt thou " have Leiſure to make thy Confeſſion? " Shalt thou have the Aſſiſtance of thy " ghoſtly Father?" Alas! Of all this thou knoweſt nothing at all: Only certain it is, that thou muſt die; and that, as it almoſt always happens, much ſooner than thou imagineſt.

Conſider, 3*dly*, That Death being ſo certain, and the Time and Manner of it ſo uncertain, it would be no ſmall Comfort, if a Man could die more than once, that ſo if he ſhould have the Misfortune once to die ill, he might repair the Fault by taking more Care a ſecond Time. But, alas! we can die but once: And when once we have ſet our Foot within the Gates of Eternity, there is no coming back. If we die once well, it will be always well: But if once ill, it will

will be ill for all Eternity. O! dreadful Moment, upon which depends an endleſs Eternity! O bleſſed Lord, prepare us for that fatal Hour.

Conſider, 4*thly*, The Folly and Stupidity of the greateſt part of Men, who tho' they daily ſee ſome or other of their Friends, Acquaintance or Neighbours carried off by Death, and that very often in the Vigour of their Youth, very often by ſudden Death, yet always imagine Death to be at a diſtance from them; as if thoſe Arrows of Death, which are falling on all ſides of them, would not reach them too in their turn, or as if they had any greater Security than ſo many others who are daily ſwept away. Senſeleſs Worldlings! Why will you not open your Eyes? Why will you fondly imagine yourſelves ſecure from the Stroke of Death, when you cannot ſo much as promiſe yourſelves one ſingle Day of Life? How many will die before the End of this Month, that are as young, as ſtrong, and as healthy as you are. Who knows but you may be of that Number? Ah! Chriſtians, take care leſt you be ſurpriſed. Set your Houſe in Order:

And for the future fly from Sin, the only Evil which makes Death terrible. Live always in thoſe Diſpoſitions in which you would gladly be found at the Hour of your Death. To act otherwiſe, is to renounce both Religion and Reaſon.

Conſider, 5*thly*, The State and Condition of this corruptible Body of ours, as ſoon as we are dead: Alas! it immediately becomes pale, ſtiff, loathſome and hideous; inſomuch, that our deareſt Friends can ſcarce endure to watch one Night in the ſame Room with it, much leſs bear to lie in the ſame Bed. And ſo faſt does it tend to Stench and Corruption, that its neareſt Relations are the firſt to deſire to get it out of the Houſe, and to lay it deep under Ground, that it may not infect the Air. But what Companions, what Attendance muſt it meet with there? Worms and Maggots. For theſe, O Man, thou art pampering thy Body: Theſe are to be thy Inheritance; or rather, they are to inherit thee: Whatever thou art To-day, To-morrow thou art to be the Food of Worms. Ah! Worldlings, that are enamour'd with your own or others Beauty, and thereby

too

too often drawn from your Allegiance to God, vouchſafe for once to reflect upon the Condition to which both you and they muſt ſo ſoon be reduced, and you will ſee what little Reaſon you have to ſet your Affections upon theſe painted Dunghills, which will ſo quickly betray what they are, and end in Noiſomeneſs and Corruption. We read, that St. *Francis Borgia* was ſo touched with the bare Sight of the ghaſtly Countenance of the Empreſs *Iſabella* after Death, whom he had ſeen a little before in all her Majeſty, and all her Charms, as to conceive an eternal Diſguſt of this World, and a happy Reſolution of conſecrating himſelf wholly to the Service of that King who never dies. Let the like Conſideration move us to the like Reſolution.

CHAP. VIII.

On the Sentiments we ſhall have at the Hour of our Death.

The Eighth DAY.

CONSIDER, *1ſt*, Chriſtian Soul, what will be thy Sentiments at the Hour of Death with regard to this World, and all its periſhable Goods, vain Honours, falſe Riches, and cheating Pleaſures. Alas! the World muſt then end in thy Regard; it will turn upſide down before thy Eyes; and thou wilt begin to ſee clearly the Nothingneſs of all thoſe Things on which thou haſt here ſet thy Heart. How wilt thou then deſpiſe all worldly Honours, and Preferments, when thou ſeeſt thyſelf at the Brink of the Grave, where the Worms will make no Diſtinction between the King and the Beggar? How little Account wilt thou then make of the Eſteem of Men, who now will think no more of thee? How wilt thou undervalue thy Riches, which muſt now be left behind thee; when ſix

Foot

Foot of Land, a Coffin and a Shroud will be all thy Poſſeſſion? How deſpicable will all worldly Pleaſures then ſeem to thee, which at the beſt could never give thee any true Satisfaction, and now fly from thee, and diſſolve into Smoke in thy Sight. Ah! my poor Soul, enter now into the ſame Sentiments which thou ſhalt certainly have at the Hour of thy Death; thus, and only thus, thou ſhalt be out of Danger of being put upon by this deceitful World.

Conſider, 2*dly*, What will then be thy Thoughts with regard to thy Sins; when the Curtain will begin to be withdrawn, with which thy buſy Self-love has induſtriouſly hidden or diſguiſed the Deformity and Malice of thy Crimes; and they ſhall be ſet before thy Eyes in their true Light: When ſo many Things, which thou waſt willing to perſwade thyſelf were but ſmall Faults, or none at all, will preſent themſelves before thee in other Kind of Colours, as great and heinous Offences: When that falſe Conſcience, which thou haſt framed to thyſelf, and under the Cover of which thou haſt paſſed over many Things in thy Confeſſions,

as ſlight and inconſiderable, which thou waſt aſhamed to declare, or unwilling to forſake, ſhall no longer be able to maintain itſelf, at the Approach of Death. Ah! what Anguiſh, what Confuſion, what dreadful Temptations of Deſpair muſt ſuch a Sight as this give to the dying Sinner! Learn thou, my Soul, to take better Meaſures now in Time, and thus to prevent ſo great a Miſery.

Conſider, 3*dly*, And take a nigher View of the lamentable State of a Sinner at the Hour of his Death; when all Things ſeem to conſpire againſt him, and whichſoever Way he looks for any Eaſe or Comfort, he can find none. Before his Eyes he ſees a whole Army of Sins muſter'd up; a Viper's Brood of his own Offspring, which ſtick cloſe to him, and, aſſailing him with their united Forces, make him already begin to feel the Gripes of that never-dying Worm of Conſcience, which ſhall be the eternal Torment of the Damn'd. O! how gladly would he ſhake off this troubleſome Company: But all in vain; they are reſolved not to leave him. If he looks back into his paſs'd Life, to ſeek for ſome good Works,

to

to oppoſe this Army of Sins, alas! he finds the Good that he has done has been ſo inconſiderable, ſo inſignificant as to give him no Hopes of its weighing down the Scales, when ballanced with his multiplied Crimes. His very Prayers, the Confeſſions and Communions which he has made, fly now in his Face, and upbraid him with his wretched Negligence, and his ſacrilegious Abuſe of theſe great Means of Salvation. The ſight of all Things about him, his Wife, his Children, his Friends, his worldly Goods, which he has loved more than his God, ſerves for nothing now but to increaſe his Anguiſh. And what is his greateſt Miſery is, that the Agonies of his Sickneſs give him little or no Leiſure or Ability to apply himſelf ſeriouſly to the greateſt and moſt difficult of all Concerns, which is, a perfect Converſion to God after a long Habit of Sin. O! how truly may the Sinner now repeat theſe Words of the Pſalmiſt; *The Sorrows of Death have encompaſſed me, and the Perils of Hell have found me, Pſ.* 114. O! what unſpeakable Anguiſh muſt it be to ſee himſelf juſt embarking upon Eternity, an

infinite and endleſs Duration, an immenſe Ocean, to whoſe further Shore the poor Sailor can never reach; and to have ſo much Reaſon to fear, it will be to him an Eternity of Woe.

Conſider, 4*thly*, My Soul, what thy Sentiments will be at the Hour of thy Death, with relation to the Service of God, to Virtue and Devotion: How lovely then will the Way of Virtue appear to thee? How wilt thou then wiſh to have follow'd that charming Path? O! what a Satisfaction is it to a dying Man to have lived well! what a Comfort to ſee himſelf now at an End of all his Labours and Dangers; to find himſelf at the Gates of eternal Reſt, of everlaſting Peace, after a long and doubtful War! he may now ſecurely come down from his Watch-tower, and repoſe himſelf for ever in the Kingdom of his Father. O! what a Pleaſure, what a Joy to look forward into that bleſſed Eternity! O! how *precious in the Sight of God is the Death of his Saints*, Pſ. 115. Ah! *Let my Soul die the Death of the Juſt, and let my End be like to theirs*, Numb. 23. Chriſtians, if we would die the Death of

of the Juſt, we muſt live the Life of the Juſt: The only ſecurity for a good Death, is a good Life.

Conſider, 5*thly*, Or rather conclude from the foregoing Conſiderations on Death, to make it the whole Buſineſs of your Life to prepare for Death. Upon dying well depends nothing leſs than Eternity: If we die ill, we are loſt, and loſt for ever. As, then, we came into the World for nothing elſe, but to provide for Eternity, ſo we may truly ſay, we came into the World for nothing elſe, but to learn to die well. This is the great Leſſon which we muſt all ſtudy. Alas! if we miſs it, when we are call'd to the Trial, an endleſs Woe muſt of neceſſity be the Conſequence. Ah! how hard it is to learn to perform that well, which can be done but once!

CHAP. IX.

On the particular Judgment after Death.

The Ninth Day.

CONSIDER, 1*ſt*, That the Soul is no ſooner parted from the Body, but ſhe is immediately preſented before the Judge, in order to give an Account of her whole Life, of all that ſhe has thought, ſaid, or done, during her Abode in the Body; and to receive Sentence accordingly. For that the eternal Doom of every Soul is decided by a particular Judgment immediately after Death, is what we learn from the Goſpel, in the Example of *Dives* and *Lazarus*: And the Sentence that paſſes here will be ratified in the general Judgment at the laſt Day. Chriſtians, how ſtand your Accounts with God? What could you be able to ſay for yourſelves, if this Night you ſhould be cited to the Bar? It may perhaps be your Caſe. Remember that your Lord will come when you leaſt expect him; take care then to be always ready.

Conſider,

Conſider, 2*dly*, How exact, how rigorous this Judgment will be, where even the leaſt idle Word cannot eſcape the Scrutiny of the Judge. O! what Treaſures of Iniquity will here come to light, when the Veil ſhall be removed, which hides at preſent the greateſt part of our Sins from the Eyes of the World, and even from our own; and the whole Hiſtory of our Lives ſhall at once be expoſed to our View. Good God! who can be able to bear this dreadful Sight? Here ſhall the poor Soul be brought to a moſt exact Examination of all that ſhe has done, or left undone, in the whole Time of her Pilgrimage in this mortal Body: How ſhe has correſponded to the Divine Inſpirations; what uſe ſhe has made of God's Graces; what Profit ſhe has reaped from the Sacraments which ſhe has received, from the Word of God which ſhe has heard or read; what Advantage ſhe has made of thoſe favourable Circumſtances in which God Almighty has placed her; how ſhe has employed the Talents with which He has entruſted her: Even her beſt Works

ſhall be nicely ſifted; her Prayers, her Faſts, her Alms-Deeds; the Intention with which ſhe has undertaken them, the Manner in which ſhe has perform'd them: All ſhall be weighed, not in the deceitful Ballance of the Judgment of Men, but in the Scales of the Sanctuary. Ah! how many of our Actions will here be found to want Weight, according to that of *Dan.* 5. *Thou haſt been weigh'd in the Ballance, and art found of too little Weight. O! Enter not into Judgment with thy Servant, O Lord; for no Man living ſhall be juſtified in thy Sight*, Pſ. 142.

Conſider, 3*dly*, The Qualities of the Judge before whom we muſt appear. He is infinitely *Wiſe*, and therefore cannot be deceived; he is infinitely *Powerful*, and therefore cannot be withſtood; he is infinitely *Juſt*, and therefore will *render to every one according to his Works*. No Favour to be expected at this Day: The Time of Merit and of acceptable Repentance is now at an End. Ah! Chriſtians, think well on't now, whilſt it is *your Day:* You may now waſh away your Sins by penitential

tial Tears, and thus hide them from the Eyes of your future Judge; you may at preſent tie up his Hands by humble Prayer; you may appeal from his Juſtice to the Court of his Mercy, and cauſe him to cancel the Sentence that ſtands againſt you: But at that Day you will find him inexorable: Your Prayers and Tears will then come too late.

Conſider, 4*thly*, The ineſtimable Comfort that the Souls of the Juſt ſhall receive at this Day from the Company of their good Works, which like an invincible Rampart ſhall ſurround them on all ſides, and keep their helliſh Foes at a diſtance. O! my Soul, let us take care to provide ourſelves ſuch Attendants as theſe againſt that Hour, which is to decide our eternal Doom. Theſe are Friends indeed, that will not forſake us even in Death; and will effectually plead our Cauſe at that Bar, where no other Eloquence will be regarded.

Conſider, 5*thly*, In what a wretched Plight the Sinner, who has taken no care to lay up any ſuch Proviſion of good

good Works, ſhall now ſtand before his Judge. O! how all Things now ſpeak to him the melancholy Sentence, that is juſt now going to fall upon his guilty Head. Whatever Way he looks, he ſees nothing that can give him any Comfort; but on the contrary, all Things that contribute to his greater Anguiſh and Terror. Beneath his Feet he ſees Hell open, ready to ſwallow him up; above his Head, an angry Judge preparing to thunder out againſt him the irrevocable Sentence of eternal Damnation: On his Right-hand, he ſees his Guardian Angel, now abandoning him; on his Left, the Devils, his mercileſs Enemies, juſt ready to ſeize upon him, and only waiting for the Beck of the Judge: If he looks behind him, he diſcovers a cheating World which now retires from him; if he looks before him, he meets with nothing but a diſmal Eternity. Within him he feels the intolerable Stings of a guilty Conſcience; and on all ſides of him he perceives an Army of hideous Monſters, his own Sins, more terrible to him now than the Furies of Hell. Good God! deli-

ver

ver me from ever having any ſhare in ſuch a Scene of Miſery.

Conſider, 6*thly*, That in order to prevent the Judgment of God from falling heavy upon us after our Death, we muſt take care now during our Life to judge and chaſtiſe ourſelves, by doing ſerious Penance for our Sins. Thus, and only thus, ſhall we diſarm the Juſtice of God enkindled by our Sins. Let us follow the Advice of him who is to be our Judge, who calls upon us all to *Watch* and *Pray* at all times, that ſo we may be found worthy to eſcape theſe dreadful Dangers, and ſtand with Confidence before the Son of Man, *Luke* 21. v. 36. Ah! let this Judgment be always before our Eyes: Let us daily meditate on this Account, that we are one Day to give. Let us never forget, that there is an Eye above, that ſees all Things; that there is an Ear, that hears all Things; that there is an Hand, that writeth down all our Thoughts, Words, and Deeds, in the great accounting Book; and that all our Actions paſs from our Hands, to the Hands of God; that what is done in Time, paſſeth not away

way with Time, but ſhall ſubſiſt after all Time is paſt. *O! That Men would be wiſe, and would underſtand* theſe Truths, *and provide* in earneſt *for their laſt End!* Deuter. 32.

CHAP. X.

On the great accounting Day.

The Tenth DAY.

CONSIDER, *1ſt*, That nothing can be conceived more terrible than the Proſpect, which the Scripture gives us of the laſt accounting Day, with all the Prodigies that ſhall go before it. The Sun darken'd, the Moon red as Blood, the Stars without Light, and ſeeming to fall from the Firmament; the Earth ſhaken with violent Earthquakes, the Sea ſwelling and roaring with unuſual Tempeſts, the Elements all in Confuſion, and whole Nature in Diſorder. *The Day of the Lord*, ſays the Prophet *Joel*, Chap. 2. *a Day of Darkneſs and Obſcurity, a Day of Clouds and Whirlwinds. Before*

its

its Face devouring Fire, and behind it burning Flames. The Earth ſhall tremble at the Appearance of it, and the Heavens be moved at its Sight. The Sun and Moon are darken'd, and the Stars have withdrawn all their Light. And the Prophet *Sophonias*, Chap. 1. cries out, *That Day, a Day of Wrath, a Day of Tribulation and Anguiſh, a Day of Calamity and Miſery, a Day of Darkneſs and Obſcurity, a Day of Miſts and Wirldwinds.* Can any Thing be more frightful than theſe Deſcriptions? Ah! what will then be the Thoughts of ſinful Man, who ſees himſelf threaten'd by all theſe Signs. Alas! he ſhall perfectly wither away with Fear, in Expectation of that Tragedy, which muſt follow theſe dreadful Preludes.

Conſider, 2*dly*, That the laſt Day being come, a Fire, raging like an impetuous Torrent, ſhall, by the Command of God, conſume the whole Surface of the Earth, and all that is thereon; nothing ſhall eſcape it. Where, O Worldlings, will be then all your ſtately Palaces, your pleaſant Seats, your Gardens, Fountains and Grottos? Where your

your Gold, Silver, and precious Stones, *&c.* Alas! all that you have ſet your Hearts on in this World, ſhall in a Moment be reduced to Aſhes; to ſhew you the Vanity of the Things you loved, and your own Folly in placing your Affection upon ſuch glittering Shadows, upon ſuch painted Bubbles. Learn then, my Soul, to deſpiſe this World, and all its Goods, ſince all muſt end in Aſhes and Smoke; and lay up for thyſelf a Treaſure in Heaven, which alone will be out of the reach of this laſt Fire.

Conſider, 3*dly*, That the final End of this World being now come, the Archangel ſhall ſound the laſt Trumpet, and raiſe his Voice with a *Surgite mortui, Ariſe ye Dead, and come to Judgment:* A Voice, that ſhall at once be heard over all the Univerſe, that ſhall pierce the higheſt Heaven, and penetrate down to the loweſt Abyſs of Hell: At this Voice, in an Inſtant, by God's Almighty Power, all the Children of *Adam*, from the firſt to the laſt, ſhall ariſe from the Duſt, and every Soul ſhall be again united to its reſpective Body, never

never more to part for Eternity. Oh! my Soul, let this laſt Trumpet always eccho in thy Ears! O! take care to prevent the Terrors of this Summons, by hearkening now to another Summons of the great Trumpet of the Holy Ghoſt, who calls upon thee by the Mouth of the Apoſtle, *Ariſe thou that ſleepeſt, and riſe from the Dead*, that is, from the Death of Sin, *and* Chriſt *ſhall enlighten thee*, Eph. 5. 'Tis thus, by having part in the firſt Reſurrection, thou ſhalt provide in Time againſt that dreadful Hour when *Time ſhall be no more*, Apoc. 10. 'Tis thus thou ſhalt eſcape the ſecond Death.

Conſider, 4*thly*, The wonderful Difference there will be, at the Time of this general Reſurrection, between the Bodies of the Juſt, and thoſe of the Wicked. The Juſt ſhall ariſe in Bodies moſt beautiful, more pure than the Stars, more reſplendent than the Sun, immortal and impaſſible: But the Wicked ſhall ariſe in Bodies ſuitable to their Deſerts, foul, black, hideous, and every way loathſome and inſupportable; immortal, 'tis true, but to no other End than

than to endure immortal Torments. What an inexpreſſible Rack will it be to theſe wretched Souls, to be forced into ſuch Carcaſſes, to be condemn'd to an eternal Confinement in ſo horrid, ſo filthy an Abode! Ah! take thou care, my Soul, to keep thy Body now pure from the Corruption of carnal Sins, leaſt otherwiſe it be one Day an Aggravation of thy eternal Miſery.

Conſider, 5*thly*, With how much Satisfaction and Joy the Souls of the Juſt ſhall be united again to their Bodies, which they have ſo long deſired; with what Affection they ſhall embrace thoſe fellow Partners of all their Labours, of all their Sufferings and Mortifications; and now deſign'd, by ſharing in the Glory of the heavenly *Sion*, to give an Addition to their eternal Happineſs. But O! what dreadful Curſes ſhall paſs at the melancholy Meeting of the Souls and Bodies of the Reprobate! Accurſed Carcaſe, will the Soul ſay, was it to pleaſe thee, to indulge thy bruriſh Inclinations, that I have forfeited the immortal Joys of Heaven? Ah! Wretch, to give thee a filthy Pleaſure for a Moment, I have damn'd

damn'd both myſelf and thee to all Eternity. O thrice accurſed Carrion, 'tis juſt, 'tis juſt, that thou, who haſt been the Cauſe of my Damnation, ſhouldſt be my Partner in eternal Woe. But oughtſt not thou rather, unhappy Soul, to be a thouſand times accurſed by thy Body, ſince it was thy Buſineſs, and was in thy Power to have ſubjected its Paſſions and Luſt to the Rule of Reaſon and Religion; and thou didſt rather chuſe, for the ſake of a momentary Satisfaction, to enſlave thyſelf to its ſenſual Inclinations, and ſo to purchaſe Hell both for thyſelf and thy Body? Ah! Chriſtians, let us learn to be wiſe by the Conſideration of others Misfortunes.

CHAP. XI.

On the general Judgment.

The Eleventh DAY.

CONSIDER, *1ſt*, That the Dead being all riſen ſhall immediately be aſſembled together in the Place deſign'd

ſign'd for the laſt Judgment, commonly believed to be the Valley of *Joſaphat* near *Jeruſalem*, in the ſight of Mount *Olivet* and Mount *Calvary*, where our Lord heretofore ſhed his Blood for our Redemption. What a Sight will it be to behold here all the Children of *Adam*, that innumerable Multitude of all Nations, Ages, and Degrees, ſtanding together without any Diſtinction, now, of Rich or Poor, Great or Little, Maſter or Servant, Monarch or Subject; excepting only the Diſtinction of *Good* and *Bad*, which ſhall be wonderful and eternal. Alas! how mean a Figure will an *Alexander* or a *Cæſar* make at this Appearance, or any of thoſe great Heroes of Antiquity, whoſe very Name has made whole Nations tremble? Thoſe mighty Monarchs, who had once the World at their beck, are now levell'd with the meaneſt of their Slaves, and would wiſh a thouſand times never to have borne the Scepter, nor worn the Diadem.

Conſider, 2*dly*, That the Dead being now aſſembled together, the great Judge ſhall deſcend from Heaven with great Glory

Glory and Majeſty, environ'd with all his heavenly Courtiers, and all the Legions of Angels. O! how different from his firſt Coming will this his ſecond Appearance be? His firſt coming was in great Meekneſs and Humility, becauſe that was our Day, in which he came to redeem us by his *Mercy:* But at his ſecond Coming it will be his Day, when he ſhall arm himſelf with all the Terrors of his *Juſtice*, to revenge upon ſinful Man the Cauſe of his injured *Mercy*, with a final Vengeance once for all. Miſerable Sinners! how will you be able to ſtand before his Face, or endure his wrathful Countenance? Ah! then it is you will begin to cry out to the Mountains and Rocks to fall upon you, and hide you from the Face of him that ſitteth on the Throne, and from the Wrath of the Lamb. Nay, ſuch a Dread and Terror will the very Sight of the incenſed Judge carry with it, that you ſhall even wiſh a thouſand times to hide your guilty Heads in the loweſt Hell, rather than endure this dreadful Appearance: But all in vain, you muſt ſtand it out.

Conſider,

Conſider, 3*dly*, That before the Judge ſhall be borne the royal Standard of the Croſs, ſhining more bright than the Sun, to the great Comfort of the Good, and the unſpeakable Anguiſh and Confuſion of the Wicked, for having made ſo little Uſe of the ineſtimable Benefit of their Redemption. Here they ſhall plainly ſee, how much their God has ſuffer'd for their Salvation; how great has been his Love for them, that boundleſs and unparallel'd Love, which brought him down from the Throne of Glory, and nail'd him to the Croſs. O! how will they now condemn their own Obſtinacy in Sin, their Blindneſs and Ingratitude! O! how will this glorious Enſign juſtify, in the Face of the whole Univerſe, the Conduct of God, and the Eternity of Hell's Torments: For what leſs than a miſerable Eternity can be Puniſhment enough for ſo much Obſtinacy in Evil, after ſo much Love?

Conſider, 4*thly*, How at the Command of the ſoveraign Judge, which ſhall be inſtantly obeyed, the Servants of God ſhall be picked out from the midſt of that vaſt Multitude, and placed with

with Honour on his Right-hand; whilſt the Wicked, with all thoſe evil Spirits, whoſe Part they have taken, ſhall with Ignominy be driven to the Left. O! dreadful and eternal Separation, after which theſe two Companies ſhall never more meet. And thou, my Soul, where doſt thou expect to ſtand at that Day? In which of theſe two Companies ſhalt thou be ranked? Thou haſt it now in thy Choice: Chuſe then now that *better Part, which will never be taken from thee. Fly* now *from the midſt of* Babylon; renounce now the falſe Maxims, the corrupt Cuſtoms, and ſinful Divertiſements of Worldlings; ſeparate thyſelf from the Wicked in Time, that thou mayſt not be involved in their eternal Damnation.

Conſider, 5*thly*, What will then be the Thoughts of the great Ones of this World; what Fury, what Envy, what bitter Anguiſh and Confuſion will oppreſs their Souls, when they ſhall ſee the Poor in Spirit, the Meek and Humble, who were ſo contemptible in their Eyes whilſt they were here in this mortal Life, now honoured and exalted in

the Sight of the whole Univerſe; and themſelves treated with ſo much Contempt? Hearken to their Complaints as they are ſet down by the wiſe Man, *Wiſd.* 5. *Theſe are they, whom heretofore we laugh'd at, and whom we made the Subject of our Scoffs. Senſeleſs* Wretches *as we were, we eſteem'd their Life Madneſs, and their End without Honour. See how they are now reckon'd amongſt the Children of God, and with the Saints is their* eternal *Lot. Ergo erravimus à viâ veritatis.* Alas! After all, we are the Perſons that have been miſtaken; we, that have unfortunately run on in the wrong Way: And they were truly wiſe in making a better Choice, which afforded them Comfort in Life, and has now entitled them to endleſs Joys.

Conſider, 6*thly*, How much the Anguiſh and Confuſion of the Wicked will be increaſed, at the Opening of the Books of Conſciences, when all the Guilt of their whole Lives ſhall be laid open in the public View of the Univerſe. Poor Sinner, what will thy Thoughts be, when thoſe Crimes, which thou

thou haſt committed in the greateſt Secrecy, and which thou wouldſt not have had known for the World; thoſe Abominations which thou imaginedſt covered with the Obſcurity of Night and Darkneſs, and which thou didſt flatter thyſelf that thy Friends and Acquaintance would never know; thoſe Works of Iniquity, which perhaps thou couldſt not find in thy Heart to diſcover to one Perſon, tied by all Laws to a perpetual Secrecy; ſhall all now be expoſed in their true Colours to the Eyes of the whole World, Angels and Men, good and bad, to thy eternal Shame. Ah! Chriſtians, 'tis now in your Power to prevent, by a ſincere Repentance and Confeſſion, this Confuſion which you muſt otherwiſe one Day ſuffer.

CHAP. XII.

On the laſt Sentence of the Good and Bad.

The Twelfth DAY.

CONSIDER, *1ſt*, How this great Trial ſhall be concluded by a

final definitive Sentence in Favour of the Juſt, and for the Condemnation of the Wicked. And firſt, the ſoveraign Judge, turning himſelf towards his Elect, with a moſt ſweet and amiable Countenance, ſhall invite them into the happy Manſions of everlaſting Bliſs: *Come ye bleſſed of my Father, take Poſſeſſion of the Kingdom prepared for you from the Beginning of the World*, Mat. 25. O! Happy Invitation. Happy, thrice happy they, that ſhall be found worthy to hear that comfortable Sentence! what unſpeakable Satisfaction, what Torrents of Joy and Pleaſure, will the hearing of it give to thoſe bleſſed Creatures! *I am filled with Joy*, ſays the royal Prophet, *at the happy Tidings which I have heard, we are to enter into the Houſe of our Lord*, Pſalm 121. But O! what Envy, what Rage and Malice will the Reprobate feel at the hearing of this Invitation, when they ſhall ſee ſeveral of their Acquaintance call'd to take Poſſeſſion of that eternal Kingdom, which they might alſo have ſo eaſily purchas'd; but by their own Folly and Stupidity have

have blindly exchanged for the Flames of Hell.

Conſider, 2*dly*, And ponder at Leiſure upon this happy Sentence. *Come*, ſays the Judge, *ye bleſſed of my Father*, &c. *Come* from the Vale of Tears, where for a little while you have been tried and afflicted by the Appointment of my Providence, to the Kingdom of never-ending Joy; where Grief and Sorrow ſhall be no more. *Come* from the Place of Baniſhment, where for a Time you have ſigh'd and groan'd at your Diſtance from your heavenly Country, to your everlaſting Home, where you ſhall meet with all that your Heart can deſire to compleat your Happineſs; where you ſhall be for ever inebriated by the Plenty of my Houſe, and drink for ever at the Fountain of Life: Ariſe, my Beloved, the Winter is now paſt, the Floods and Storms are over, ariſe and come. O univerſal and eternal Bleſſing! How my poor Soul contemns all other Happineſs, in hopes of having a Share one Day in this bleſſed Sentence!

Conſider, 3*dly*, How the great Judge after having invited the Juſt to his glorious Kingdom, turning himſelf towards the Wicked on his Left-hand, with Fire in his Eyes, and Terror in his Countenance, ſhall thunder out againſt them the dreadful Sentence of their eternal Doom, in theſe Words. *Go from me you Curſed into everlaſting Fire, which was prepared for the Devil and his Angels.* Chriſtian Souls, weigh well every Word of this diſmal Sentence. *Go* for ever *from me*, and from the Joys of my Kingdom: O terrible Excommunication! O cruel Divorce! O eternal Baniſhment! Who can expreſs, who can conceive what it is to be for ever ſeparated from our God, our firſt Beginning, and laſt End, our great and ſoveraign Good! Ah Wretches, who make ſo little now of loſing your God by mortal Sin, what will you then think when you ſhall be ſentenc'd to this eternal Baniſhment from him; doom'd to ſeek him for all Eternity, and yet never to meet with him in any of his Attributes, only in his avenging Juſtice, the Weight of which you ſhall feel

feel for ever. But take Notice whither you are to go, when you go from your God: Alas! *into everlaſting Fire*, there to lead an ever-dying Life, there to endure a never-ending Death, in the Company of the *Devil and his Angels*; to whom you made yourſelves Slaves, and who ſhall now, without Controul, exerciſe for ever their Tyranny over you.

Conſider, 4*thly*, That dreadful and univerſal *Curſe*, which this juſt, but diſmal Sentence involves. *Go from me you Curſed*, ſays the ſoveraign Judge: as if he was to ſay, *Go*, *depart from me*, but let my *Curſe* go with you. I would have given you my *Bleſſing*, but you would not have it; a *Curſe* you choſe, and a *Curſe* ſhall be your everlaſting Inheritance. It ſhall ſtick cloſe to you like a Garment to all Eternity; it ſhall enter into your very Bowels, and ſearch into the very Marrow of your Bones. A Curſe upon your *Eyes*, never to ſee the leaſt Glimpſe of comfortable Light: A Curſe on your *Ears*, to be entertain'd for all Eternity with frightful Shrieks and Groans: A Curſe on your *Taſte*,

to

to be for ever imbittered with the Gall of Dragons: A Curſe on your *Smell*, to be always tormented with the noiſome Stench of the Pit of Hell: A Curſe on your *Feeling*, and on all the Members of your Body, to burn and never conſume in that Fire which ſhall never be quenched: A Curſe upon your *Underſtanding*, never to be illuſtrated with any Rays of Truth: A Curſe on your *Memory*, to be always revolving, in the Bitterneſs of a late and fruitleſs Repentance, the Shortneſs and Vanity of paſt Pleaſures: A Curſe upon the *Imagination*, ever repreſenting preſent and future Miſeries: A Curſe on the *Will*, obſtinate in Evil, torn in Pieces with a thouſand violent and, withal, oppoſite Deſires, and unable to accompliſh any of them: A Curſe, in fine, upon the *whole Soul*, to be a Hell to itſelf for all Eternity. Good God! let it never be our Misfortune to incur this dreadful Curſe!

Conſider, 5*thly*, How after Sentence given, the Elect ſhall enter without Delay upon the Poſſeſſion of that everlaſting Kingdom, which God has prepared

pared for thoſe that ſerve him, where Sorrow can have no Place, and Joy no End. But as for the Wicked, the Earth ſhall immediately open, and ſwallow them all down at once, with the Devils who ſeduced them, into the bottomleſs Pit; and the *Gate ſhall be ſhut*, never, never more to be open'd. This is the End of all worldly Pride; this is the end of all carnal Pleaſure. O! how *horrid a thing it is to fall into the Hands of the living God!* Heb. 10.

CHAP. XIII.

On Hell.

The Thirteenth DAY.

CONSIDER, *1ſt*, That as it is ſaid in Holy Writ, that *neither Eye has ſeen, nor Ear has heard, nor has it enter'd into the Heart of Man, what God has prepared for thoſe that ſerve him*, 1 Cor. 2. v. 9. So we may truly ſay with Regard to Hell's Torments, that no mortal Tongue can expreſs them, nor Heart conceive them.

Beati-

Beatitude, according to Divines, is a *perfect and never-ending State, comprizing at once all that is good, without any Mixture of Evil.* If then Damnation be the Oppoſite to Beatitude, it muſt needs be an everlaſting Deluge of all that is Evil, without the leaſt Mixture of Good, without the leaſt Allay of Eaſe, without the leaſt Glimpſe of Comfort; a total Privation of all Happineſs, and a Chaos of all Miſery.

Conſider, 2*dly*, More in particular what Damnation is, and how many and how great the Miſeries it involves. A dying Life, or rather a living Death; a darkſome Priſon, a loathſome Dungeon; a binding Hand and Foot in eternal Chains; a Land of Horrour and Miſery; a Lake of Fire and Brimſtone; a bottomleſs Pit; devouring Flames; a Serpent ever knawing; a Worm that never dies; a Body always burning, and never conſumed; a Feeling always freſh for Suffering; a Thirſt never extinguiſh'd; perpetual weeping, wailing and gnaſhing of Teeth. No other Company but Devils, and damn'd Wretches, all hating and curſing one another,

another, all hating and curſing God; Spirits always in an Agony, and ſick to Death, yet never meeting with this Death which they ſo much deſire; caſt forth from the Face of God into the Land of Oblivion; hated and derided by God and his Saints; none to comfort, none to pity them; wounded to the Heart with the Senſe of loſt Happineſs; and oppreſs'd with the feeling of preſent Miſery: And all theſe Sufferings everlaſting, without the leaſt Hope of End, of Intermiſſion, or Abatement. This is a ſhort Deſcription, drawn for the moſt part from God's unerring Word, of the Miſeries which eternal Damnation imports: This is that bitter *Cup* of which *all the Sinners of the Earth muſt drink*, Pſ. 74.

Conſider, 3*dly*, That God in all his Attributes is infinite; as in his Power, Wiſdom, Goodneſs, *&c.* ſo in his avenging Juſtice too. He is a God in Hell, as much as in Heaven. So that by the Greatneſs of his Love, Mercy and Patience here, we may meaſure the Greatneſs of his future Wrath and Vengeance againſt impenitent Sinners. By his

his infinite Goodneſs he has drawn them out of nothing; he has preſerv'd and ſuſtained them for a long time; he has even come down from his Throne of Glory, and ſuffered himſelf to be nail'd to a diſgraceful Croſs, for their eternal Salvation: He has frequently delivered them from the Dangers to which they were daily expoſed; patiently borne with their Inſolence and repeated Treaſons; ſtill graciouſly inviting them to Repentance. Ah! how juſtly does his Patience, ſo long abuſed, turn at length into Fury: Mercy at laſt gives place to Juſtice: And a thouſand Woes to thoſe Wretches, that muſt for ever feel the dreadful Weight of the avenging Hand of the living God!

Conſider, 4*thly*, And in order to underſtand ſomething better what Hell is, ſet before your Eyes a poor ſick Man lying on his Bed, burning with a peſtilential Fever, attended with an univerſal Pain over all his Body, his Head perfectly rent aſunder, his Eyes ready to fly out, his Teeth raging, his Sides pierc'd with dreadful Stitches, his Breaſt all on Fire, his Belly rack'd with a vio-

a violent Cholick; his Reins with the Stone or Gravel; all his Limbs tormented with Rheumatick Pains; and all his Joints with the Gout; his Heart even burſting with Anguiſh, and he crying out for a Drop of Water to cool his Tongue. Could any Thing be conceived more miſerable? And yet, let me tell you, this is but an imperfect Picture of what the Damn'd muſt endure for Eternity; where theſe Victims, immolated to the Juſtice of God, ſhall be *ſalted all over with Fire*; and endure in all the Senſes and Members of their Body, and in all the Faculties of their Souls, moſt exquiſite Torments.

Conſider, 5*thly*, That the State of the poor ſick Man, of whom we have juſt now been ſpeaking, how deplorable ſoever it may ſeem, might ſtill be capable of ſome Allay of Eaſe, or ſome Degree of Comfort: A good Bed to lie on, a good Friend to incourage or condole with him, a good Conſcience to ſupport him, a Will reſigned to the Will of God; and in fine, a certain Knowledge, that his Pains muſt ſhortly abate, or put an End to his Life. But

the Damn'd have nothing of all this. Their Bed in Hell is a Lake or Pit burning with Fire and Brimſtone, to which they are faſtened down with eternal Chains. Their Companions are mercileſs Devils, or what will be to them worſe than Devils, the unhappy Partners of their Sins. Their Conſcience is ever gnaw'd with the Worm that never dies. Their Will is averſe from God and continually ſtruggling in vain with his Divine Will. And what comes in to compleat their Damnation, is a Deſpair of ever meeting with an End or Abatement of their Torments. Good God! What would not a prudent Man do to prevent the lying but for one Night in Torments in this Life? And where then is our Faith and Reaſon, when we will do ſo little for eſcaping the dreadful Night of Hell's mercileſs Flames?

CHAP.

CHAP. XIV.

On the exterior Pains of Hell.

The Fourteenth DAY.

CONSIDER, *1ſt*, the Deſcription which holy *Job* gives us of Hell, *Job* 10. when he calls it *a darkſome Land, and covered with the Obſcurity of Death; a Country of Miſery and Darkneſs, where no Order, but everlaſting Horror dwells.* In this gloomy Region no Sun, no Moon, no Stars appear; no comfortable Rays of Light, not even the leaſt Glimpſe, are ever to be ſeen. The very Fire that burneth there, contrary to the natural Property of that Element, is black and darkſome, and affords no Light to the Wretches it torments, except it be to diſcover to them ſuch Objects as may increaſe their Miſery. Chriſtians, what would you think, were you to be ſentenc'd to paſs the Remainder of your Days in ſome horrid Dungeon, or Hole, deep under Ground, where you could never ſee the Light? Would not Death itſelf be pre-

ferable to ſuch a Puniſhment? And, what is this to that eternal Night, to which the Damn'd are ſentenc'd? The *Egyptians* were in a ſad Condition, when for three Days their whole Kingdom was cover'd with frightful Darkneſs, caus'd by ſuch groſs Exhalations, that they might even be felt by the Hand. But this Miſery was ſoon over, and they were comforted by the Return of Light. Not ſo the Damn'd in Hell; whoſe Night ſhall never have a Morning, nor ever expect the Dawning of the Day.

Conſider, 2*dly*, That the Horror of this eternal Night ſhall be beyond meaſure aggravated by the diſmal Muſick, with which theſe poor Wretches ſhall be for ever entertain'd in this melancholy Abode; which ſhall be no other than dreadful Curſes and Blaſphemies, the inſulting Voices of the Tormenters, and the Howlings, Groans and Shrieks of the Tormented, the Rattling of Chains, Laſhes of Whips, *&c.* And that the other Senſes may alſo come in for their Share in Miſery, the Smell ſhall be for ever regaled with the loathſome Exhalations

lations of thoſe infernal Dungeons, and the intolerable Stench of thoſe half putrified Carcaſſes which are broiling there; the Taſte ſhall be oppreſs'd with a moſt ravenous Hunger and Thirſt; and the Feeling with an inſupportable Fire.

Conſider, 3*dly*, That of all bodily Torments, which we can ſuffer in this World, there is none more terrible than to burn alive: But alas! there is no Compariſon between burning here, and burning in Hell. All our Fires upon Earth are but painted Flames, if compared to the Fire of Hell. The Fire of this World was made to ſerve us, and to be our Comfort; that of Hell was created to be an Inſtrument of God's Vengeance upon Sinners. The Fire of this World cannot ſubſiſt without being nouriſhed by ſome combuſtible Matter, which it quickly diſpatches and conſumes: The Fire of Hell, kindled by the Breath of an angry God, requires no other Fuel than Sin; and feeds on this without ever decaying or conſuming. O dreadful Stain of Sin, which ſuffices to maintain an everlaſting Fire! The Fire of this World can

only reach the Body; the Fire of Hell reaches the Soul itſelf, and fills it with moſt exquiſite Torments. Ah! Sinners, which of you all can dwell with this devouring Fire? Which of you all can endure this eternal Burning?

Conſider, 4*thly*, And in order to frame ſome better Notion of Hell's Torments, give Ear to a moſt authentick Viſion, related by St. *Tereſa*, Chap. 32 of her Life, "As I was one Day, "ſays the Saint, in Prayer, on a ſudden "I found myſelf in Hell; I know not "how I was carried thither: Only I "underſtood that our Lord was pleas'd, "that I ſhould ſee the Place which the "Devils had prepared for me there, and "which I had deſerved by my Sins. "What paſs'd here with me, laſted but "a very little while; yet, if I ſhould "live many Years, I don't believe I "ſhould ever be able to forget it. "The Entrance appear'd to me to re-"ſemble that of an Oven, very low, "very narrow, and very dark. The "Ground ſeemed like Mire, exceeding "filthy, ſtinking inſupportably, and "full of a Multitude of loathſome "Vermin.

" Vermin. At the End of it there
" was a certain hollow Place, as if it
" had been a kind of a little Preſs in a
" Wall, into which I found myſelf
" thruſt, and cloſe penn'd up. Now,
" tho' all this which I have ſaid was
" far more terrible in it ſelf than I
" have deſcribed it, yet it might paſs
" for a Pleaſure in compariſon with
" that which I felt in this Preſs: This
" Torment was ſo dreadful, that no
" Words can expreſs the leaſt part of
" it. I felt my Soul burning in ſo diſ-
" mal a Fire, that I am not able to de-
" ſcribe it. I have experienced the
" moſt inſupportable Pains, in the Judg-
" ment of Phyſicians, which can be
" corporally endured in this World,
" as well by the ſhrinking up of all my
" Sinews, as by many other Torments
" in ſeveral kinds; but all theſe were
" nothing in compariſon with what
" I ſuffer'd there, join'd to the horrid
" Thought, that this was to be without
" End or Intermiſſion for ever: And
" even this itſelf is ſtill little, if com-
" par'd to the Agony the Soul is in;
" it ſeems to her that ſhe is choak'd,

" that ſhe is ſtifled, and her Anguiſh
" and Torture go to a Degree of Ex-
" ceſs that cannot be expreſs'd. It is
" too little to ſay, that it ſeems to her
" that ſhe is butcher'd and rent in
" Pieces: Becauſe this would expreſs
" ſome Violence from without, which
" tended to her Deſtruction; whereas
" here it is ſhe herſelf, that is her own
" Executioner, and tears herſelf in
" Pieces. Now as to that interior
" Fire and unſpeakable Deſpair, which
" comes in to compleat ſo many hor-
" rid Torments; I own I am not able
" to deſcribe them. I ſaw not who it
" was that tormented me; but I per-
" ceiv'd myſelf to burn; and, at the
" ſame time, to be cut as it were and
" haſh'd in Pieces: In ſo frightful a
" Place, there was no room for the leaſt
" Hopes of Comfort: There was no
" ſuch Thing as even ſitting or lying
" down: I was thruſt into a Hole in
" a Wall; and thoſe horrible Walls
" cloſe in upon the poor Priſoners,
" and preſs and ſtifle them. There is
" nothing but thick Darkneſs without
" any Mixture of Light: And yet I
" know

"know not how it is, tho' there be "no Light there, yet one ſees there "all that may be moſt mortifying to "the Sight.-- Altho' it be about ſix "Years ſince this happened, which I "here relate, I am even now in wri-"ting of it ſo terrified, that my Blood "chills in my Veins. So that whatſo-"ever Evils or Pains I now ſuffer, if "I do but call to my Remembrance "what I then endured, all that can be "ſuffered here appears to me juſt no-"thing." So far the Saint; whoſe Relation deſerves to be ponder'd at leiſure: For if ſuch, and ſo terrible Torments had been prepared for her, whoſe Life from her Cradle, ſetting aſide a few worldly Vanities, which for a ſhort time ſhe had follow'd, had been ſo innocent, what muſt Sinners one Day expect?

Conſider, 5*thly*, That there is no Man on Earth, that has not quite loſt his Senſes, who would be willing, even for the Empire of the World, to be broil'd like a *Laurence* on the Gridiron, or roaſted for half an Hour by a ſlow Fire, tho' he was ſure to come off with

his Life: Nay, where is the Man that would even venture to hold his Finger in the Flame of a Candle for half a quarter of an Hour, for any Reward that this World can give? Where is then the Judgment of the far greater part of Chriſtians, who pretend to believe a Hell, yet live on with ſo little Apprehenſion and Concern, for Years together, in the Guilt of mortal Sin; in Danger every Moment of falling into this dreadful and everlaſting Fire, having no more than a Hair's Breadth, that is, the thin Thread of an uncertain Life, between their Souls and a miſerable Eternity. Good God! deliver us from this unfortunate Blindneſs, from this deſperate Folly and Madneſs.

CHAP. XV.

On the interior Pains of Hell.

The Fifteenth DAY.

CONSIDER, 1*ſt*, That the Fire of Hell, with all the reſt of the exterior Torments, which are endured

dured there, are terrible indeed; but no ways comparable to the interior Pains of the Soul: That *Pœna Damni*, or eternal Loſs of God, and of all that is good; that Extremity of Anguiſh which follows from this Loſs; that rueful Remorſe of a bitter, but fruitleſs Repentance, attended with everlaſting Deſpair and Rage; that Complication of all thoſe racking Tortures in the inward Powers and Faculties of the Soul, are Torments incomparably greater, than any thing that can be ſuffered in the Body.

Conſider, 2*dly*, In particular, that Pain of Loſs, which, in the Judgment of Divines, is the greateſt of all the Torments of Hell; tho' Worldlings here have Difficulty of conceiving how this can be. Alas! Poor Sinners, ſo weak is their Notion of eternal Goods, and ſo deeply are they immerſed in the Things of this World, amuſing themſelves with the Variety of created Objects, which divert their Thoughts from God's ſoveraign Goodneſs, that they cannot imagine, that this Loſs of God can be ſo great and diſmal a Torment,

as the Saints and Servants of God, who are guided by better Lights, all agree it is. But the Caſe will be quite alter'd, when they ſhall find themſelves in Hell. There they ſhall be convinced, by their own woeful Experience, what a Miſery it is to have loſt their God; to have loſt him totally, to have loſt him irrevocably, to have loſt him eternally, to have loſt him in himſelf, to have loſt him in all his Creatures; to be eternally baniſh'd from him, who was their only Happineſs, their laſt End, and ſoveraign Good, the over-flowing Fountain of all Good; and in loſing him, to have loſt all that is good, and that for ever. As long as Sinners are in this mortal Life, they many ways partake of the Goodneſs of God, *who makes his Sun to riſe upon the Good and Bad, and rains upon the Juſt and Unjuſt.* All that is agreeable in this World, all that is delightful in Creatures, and all that is comfortable in Life, is all in ſome Meaſure a Participation of the Divine Goodneſs: No wonder then that the Sinner, whilſt he ſo many ways partakes of the Goodneſs of God, ſhould not in this

Life

Life be ſenſible of what it is to be totally and eternally deprived of him. But in Hell, alas! thoſe unhappy Wretches ſhall find, that in loſing their God they have alſo loſt all Kind of Good or Comfort, which any of his Creatures heretofore afforded; inſtead of which, they find all Things now conſpiring againſt them, nor any way left of diverting the dreadful Thought of this Loſs, which is always preſent to their Minds, and gripes them with inexpreſſible Torments.

Conſider, 3*dly*, That every damn'd Soul ſhall be a Hell to herſelf, and all and every one of her Powers and Faculties ſhall have their reſpective Hells. Her Memory ſhall be for ever tormented, by revolving, without ceaſing, her paſt Folly, Stupidity and Madneſs, in forfeiting the eternal Joys of Heaven, that Ocean of Bliſs, which ſhe might have obtained at ſo cheap a Rate, and which ſo many of her Acquaintance are now in Poſſeſſion of, for an empty trifling Pleaſure that laſted but a Moment, and left nothing behind it but the Stain of Sin, and the Remorſe of a guilty

a guilty Conſcience; or, for ſome petty Intereſt, or Punctilio of Honour, by which ſhe was then robb'd of all her Treaſures and all her Honours; and, upon account of which, ſhe is now ſo miſerably poor and deſpicable, eternally trodden under Foot by inſulting Devils. O! What will her Judgment then be of this tranſitory World, and all its cheating Vanities, when, after having been Millions of Ages in Hell, looking back from that immenſe Eternity, and ſcarce being able to find out in that infinite Duration, this little Point of her mortal Life, ſhe ſhall compare Time and Eternity, paſt Pleaſures and preſent Pains, Virtue and Vice, Heaven and Hell.

Conſider, 4*thly*, That the Underſtanding of the Damn'd ſhall alſo have its Hell in being for ever deprived of the Light of Truth, always imploy'd in falſe and blaſphemous Judgments and Notions concerning God and his Juſtice, to the great Increaſe of its own Miſery; and ever dwelling upon the Thoughts of preſent and future Torments, without being able for a Moment

ment to think of any Thing elſe: So that all, and every one of the Torments which the Damn'd endure, and are to endure for all Eternity, are every Moment before the Eyes of their Underſtanding: And thus in every Moment they bear the inſupportable Load of a miſerable Eternity.

Conſider, 5*thly*, That as the obſtinate Will of the Sinner has been the moſt guilty, ſo this Power of the Soul ſhall ſuffer in Proportion the greateſt Torments; always ſeeking what he ſhall never find, and ever flying from what ſhe muſt for ever endure! Ah! What fruitleſs Longings, what vain Wiſhes, ſhall be her conſtant Entertainments, whilſt ſhe is doom'd for Eternity never to attain to any one the leaſt Thing which ſhe deſires: O! Who can expreſs that violent Impetuoſity, with which the Will of theſe Wretches is now carried towards God; ſenſible as they are of the immenſe Happineſs, which is found in the Enjoyment of him: But, alas! they always find an inviſible Hand that drives them back, or rather they always find themſelves bound

bound faſt down in eternal Chains, ſtruggling in vain with that Hand which they cannot reſiſt, and unable to make the leaſt Approach towards the Object of their reſtleſs Deſires. Hence they break forth into a thouſand Blaſphemies; hence the whole Soul is torn in Pieces with a whole Army of violent, and withal oppoſite Paſſions of Fury, Envy, Hatred, Deſpair, *&c.* Theſe Torments of the interior Powers of the Soul are attended with that never-dying Worm of Conſcience, which ſhall for ever prey upon theſe Miſcreants: By which is meant an eternal Remorſe, a bitter, but fruitleſs Repentance, which is ever racking their deſpairing Souls. Sweet *Jeſus*, deliver us from ſuch a dreadful Complication of Evils!

CHAP. XVI.

On a miſerable Eternity.

The Sixteenth Day.

CONSIDER, *1ſt*, That what above all Things makes Hell intolerable,

tolerable, is the Eternity of its Torments. 'Tis this Eternity, which is an infinite Aggravation to all and every one of them: 'Tis this bitter Ingredient, which makes every Drop of that Cup of the Divine Vengeance, of which the Sinners of the Earth muſt drink, ſo inſupportable. Were there any Hopes, that the Miſeries of the Damn'd would one Day have an End, tho' it was after Millions of Ages, Hell would be no longer Hell, becauſe it would admit of ſome Comfort. But, for all thoſe inexpreſſible Torments to continue for ever, as long as God ſhall be God, without the leaſt Hopes of ever ſeeing an End of them: O! This it is, that is the greateſt Rack of the Damn'd. O! Eternity, Eternity! How little do Worldlings apprehend thee now! How terrible wilt thou be to them one Day, when they ſhall find themſelves ingulf'd in thy bottomleſs Abyſs, there to be for ever the Butt and Mark of all the Arrows of God's avenging Juſtice!

Conſider, 2*dly*, If one ſhort Night ſeems ſo long and tedious to a poor ſick Man in a burning Fever; if he toſſes

and

and turns, and no-where finds Reſt; if he counts every Hour, and with ſo much Impatience longs for the Morning, which yet will bring him but little Relief or Comfort; what muſt this dreadful Night of Eternity be, acompanied with all the interior and exterior Torments of Hell? No Man in his Senſes would purchaſe a Kingdom at the Rate of lying for ten Years on a ſoft Bed without coming off. Ah! What Miſery then muſt it be to be chain'd down to a Bed of Fire and Brimſtone, not for ten Years only, nor yet for ten thouſand times ten, but for as many hundred thouſand Millions of Ages, as there are Drops of Water in the Ocean, or Atoms in the Air; in a Word, for an immenſe Eternity!

Conſider, 3*dly*, And in order to conceive ſtill better what this Eternity is, imagine with thyſelf, that if any one of the Damn'd was to ſhed but one ſingle Tear at the End of every thouſand Years, till he had ſhed Tears enough to fill the Sea; what an immenſe Space of Time muſt this require! The World has not yet laſted ſix thouſand Years:

Years: So that the firſt of all the Damn'd would not have ſhed ſix Tears. And yet, O dreadful Eternity! the Time will certainly come, when any one of thoſe Wretches that are now in Hell, may be able with Truth to ſay, that at the Rate of one Tear for a thouſand Years, he might have ſhed Tears enough to drown the whole World, and fill up the immenſe Space between Heaven and Earth; and happy would he be if his Torments were then to have an End. But alas! After theſe Millions of Millions of Ages, he ſhall be as far from the End of his Miſery, as he was the firſt Day he fell into Hell. Compute after this, if thou pleaſeſt, as many hundred thouſand Millions of Years, as thy Thoughts can reach to; nay, ſuppoſe the whole Surface of the Earth to be covered with numeral Figures; caſt up, if thou canſt, this immenſe Sum of Years, and then multiply it by itſelf, and multiply again a ſecond Time the Product by itſelf; and then at the Foot of this immenſe Account, write down, *Here begins Eternity.* O terrible Eternity! is it poſſible, that they who believe thee, ſhould not fear thee?

thee? Is it poſſible, that they who fear thee, ſhould dare to ſin?

Conſider, 4*thly*, That in this Eternity is would be ſome ſmall Comfort to the Damn'd, if their Pains, like thoſe of this Life, had any Intermiſſion or Abatement. But, alas! their Torments are always the ſame; their eternal Fever never abates. For as their Sins are always the ſame, and the Gate of Mercy and Pardon is eternally ſhut upon them; ſo the Puniſhments of their Sins ſhall always continue in one and the ſame Degree of Rigour, without the leaſt Remiſſion or Diminution. The rich Glutton in Hell (*Luke* 16.) has not yet been able to obtain ſo much as that ſingle Drop of Water, for which he ſo earneſtly beg'd; nor will he ever obtain it for all Eternity. Nor ſhall Length of Time inure theſe Wretches to thoſe Evils which they ſuffer, ſo as to make them the more ſupportable; or Uſe and Cuſtom harden them againſt them; but after Millions of Ages their Torments ſhall be as freſh, and their Feeling of them the ſame, as on the firſt Day. O great God! who can bear thy Indignation, or ſupport the Weight of thy avenging

ging Hand. O! dreadful Evil of mortal Sin, which can enkindle this eternal Flame!

CHAP. XVII.

On Heaven.

The Seventeenth DAY.

CONSIDER, *1ſt*, That if God's Juſtice be ſo terrible in regard to his Enemies, how much more will his Mercy, his Goodneſs, his Bounty declare itſelf in favour of his Friends. Mercy and Goodneſs are his favourite Attributes, in which he moſt delights: *His Mercies*, ſays the royal Prophet, *Pſ.* 144. *are above all his Works.* What then muſt this bleſſed Kingdom be, which in his Goodneſs he has prepared for his beloved Children, for the Manifeſtation of his Riches, his Glory and Magnificence for all Eternity. A Kingdom, which the Son of God himſelf hath purchaſed for us, at no leſs Price, than that of his own moſt precious Blood. No wonder then the Apoſtle cries

cries out, 1 *Cor.* 2. v. 9. *That neither Eye hath ſeen, nor Ear heard, nor hath it enter'd into the Heart of Man, what God hath prepared for thoſe that love him.* No wonder that this Beatitude is defined by Divines, *A perfect and everlaſting State, repleniſh'd with all that is Good, without the leaſt Mixture of Evil:* A general and univerſal Good, filling brimful the vaſt Capacity of our Affections and Deſires, and eternally ſecuring us from all Fear or Danger of Want or Change. Ah! Here it is that the Servants of God, as the *Pſalmiſt* declares, *Pſ.* 35. *Shall be inebriated with the Plenty of God's Houſe, and ſhall be made to drink of the Torrent of his Pleaſure*; even of that *Fountain of Life*, which is with him, and flows from him, into their happy Souls for ever and ever.

Conſider, 2*dly*, That altho' this bleſſed Kingdom abounds with all that can be imagined Good and Delightful, yet that there is one ſoveraign Good, in the Sight, Love and Enjoyment of which conſiſts the eſſential Beatitude of the Soul, and that is God himſelf, whom the Bleſſed ever ſee Face to Face; and, by the Contemplation of his infinite Beauty, are

are ſet on Fire with Seraphick Flames of Love, and by a moſt pure and amiable Union are transformed in a manner into God himſelf; as when Braſs or Iron in the Furnace is perfectly penetrated by the Fire, it loſeth its own Nature, and becometh all Flame and Fire. Ah happy Creatures! What can be wanting to compleat your Joys, who are in perfect Poſſeſſion of your God, the overflowing Source of all Good, who have, within and without you, the vaſt Ocean of endleſs Felicity? O! The exceſſive Bounty of our God, who giveth his Servants in reward of their Loyalty ſo great a Good, which is nothing leſs than himſelf, the immenſe Joy of Angels. O! Shall not that ſuffice, my Soul, to make thee happy, which makes God himſelf happy!

Conſider, 3*dly*, The Glory and Beauty of the heavenly *Jeruſalem*, which the holy Scripture, to accommodate itſelf to our Weakneſs, repreſents to us under the Notion of ſuch Things, which we moſt admire here below: So St. *John*, in the *Apocalypſe*, deſcribing this bleſſed City, tells us, that its Walls are of precious Stones, and its Streets of pure and

tranſparent

tranſparent Gold: That theſe Streets are water'd with the River of the Water of Life, reſplendent as Cryſtal, which flows from the Throne of God; and that on the Banks of this River on both Sides grows the Tree of Life; that there ſhall be no Night, nor any Sun or Moon, but that the Lord God ſhall be its Light for ever. O bleſſed *Jeruſalem!* O how *glorious* are the Things *that are ſaid of thee, O City of God!* But what wonder: For if our great God has given us ſuch, and ſo noble a Palace here below, in this Place of Baniſhment, beautified with this Sun, Moon and Stars, accompliſh'd and furniſh'd with this infinite Variety of Plants, Flowers, Trees, and living Creatures of ſo many Sorts, all ſubſervient to Man; if, I ſay, he has ſo richly provided for us in this Vale of Tears, and Region of the Shade of Death, what muſt our eternal Habitation be in the Land of the Living? If here he is ſo bountiful even to his Enemies, in giving them ſo commodious, ſo noble a Dwelling, what may his Friends and Servants expect in his eternal Kingdom; in which, and by which, he deſigns to manifeſt

to

to them his Greatneſs and Glory, for endleſs Ages, in an everlaſting Banquet, which he has there prepared for his Elect? Bleſſed by all Creatures be his Goodneſs for ever.

Conſider, 4*thly*, The bleſſed Inhabitants of this heavenly Kingdom, thoſe Millions of Millions of Angels, of whom the Prophet *Daniel*, having ſeen God Almighty in a Viſion, tells us, *Dan.* 7. that *Thouſands of Thouſands adminiſter'd unto him; and Ten Thouſands of Hundreds of Thouſands ſtood before him:* That infinite Multitude of Saints and Martyrs, and other Servants of God of both Sexes, gather'd out of all Nations, Tribes and Tongues; and above them all, the bleſſed Virgin Mother of God, Queen of Saints and Angels: Their Number is innumerable. But O! Who can expreſs the Happineſs of enjoying this bleſſed Company? They are all moſt noble, moſt glorious, moſt wiſe, moſt holy: They are all of Blood Royal, all Kings and Queens, all Children and Heirs of the moſt High God: Ever beautiful, and ever young, crown'd with Wreaths of immortal Glory, and ſhining much more brightly

than the Sun. Their Love and Charity for one another is more than can be conceived: They have all but one Heart, one Will, and one Soul; ſo that the Joy and Satisfaction of every one is multiplied to as many-fold, as there are bleſſed Souls and Angels in Heaven, by the inexpreſſible Delight, that each one takes in the Happineſs of all, and every one of the reſt. Chriſtians, let us imitate their Virtues here, that we may come to their happy Society hereafter, and with them eternally ſing to our God the immortal Songs of *Sion*.

Conſider, 5*thly*, That what renders all the Joys of Heaven, and the Felicity of the Bleſſed compleatly Great, is the Eternity of this Bliſs, and that infallible Certainty and Security which they enjoy; that their Happineſs is even link'd with God's Eternity; that as long as God ſhall be God, they ſhall be with him in his bleſſed Kingdom. O! my Soul, how pleaſant, how delightful it is to look forward into this vaſt Eternity, and there to loſe thyſelf in this happy Proſpect of endleſs Ages: O! Bleſs thy God, that has prepared theſe immortal Joys for the Reward of ſuch

ſuch ſmall Services, and deſign'd them from all Eternity for thee! nor ſhall this immenſe Eternity render theſe Enjoyments any ways diſagreeable or tedious by the Length of the Poſſeſſion; but as God is an endleſs Ocean of all Good, and his Divine Eſſence an inexhauſtible infinite Treaſure of Delights, ſo the Happineſs of thoſe that eternally enjoy him ſhall be always freſh, always new. Conclude then, Chriſtian Soul, to contemn and forſake all that is earthly and temporal, and from this Hour to begin thy Journey towards this glorious, heavenly and eternal Kingdom. There thou ſhalt find all that thy Heart can deſire, immortal Honours, immenſe Riches, pure and eternal Pleaſures, Life, Health, Beauty never fading, *&c.* O! this alone is thy true Home, the Land of the Living.

CHAP. XVIII.

On the ſmall Number of the Elect.

The Eighteenth DAY.

CONSIDER, *1ſt*, Thoſe Words of *Chriſt*, *Many are called, but few are choſen*; which contain a great and dreadful Truth, frequently inculcated by the Mouth of Truth itſelf, to rouſe unthinking Mortals from their profound Lethargy, into which the Enemy has lull'd them. This is one of thoſe Leſſons, which he has laid down for a Foundation of Chriſtian Morality, in his Divine Sermon on the Mountain: Where he tells us, St. *Mat.* 7. v. 13, 14. *Enter in at the narrow Gate; for broad is the Gate, and wide is the Way, that leads to Damnation, and many there are that enter by it. O! how narrow is the Gate, and ſtrait the Way, that leads to Life, and few there are that find it.* Hence in the ſame Sermon he declares to us, that *not every one that ſays to me, Lord, Lord, ſhall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven: But he that*

that doth the Will of my Father that is in Heaven, viz. by a faithful Compliance with the Law of God and his Goſpel. Without this, he aſſures us that it will avail us nothing, even to have done Miracles in his Name. *Many ſhall ſay to me on that Day* [of Judgment] *Lord, have we not propheſied in thy Name, and caſt out Devils in thy Name, and done many Wonders in thy Name? And then I will confeſs to them, that I never knew you, depart from me ye Workers of Iniquity.* Good God! what will become of us, if thoſe, that have even done Miracles in thy Name, ſhall nevertheleſs be excluded thy eternal Kingdom?

Conſider, 2*dly*, How many ways this frightful Truth has been declared or prefigur'd to us in the Old Teſtament: Of all the Inhabitants of the Earth, only eight Souls, *viz. Noah* and his Family, were preſerved by the Ark, from the Water of the Deluge. Of ſix hundred thouſand of the Children of *Iſrael*, who came out of the Land of *Egypt* under the Conduct of *Moſes*, only two Perſons, *Joſhua* and *Caleb*, enter'd *Canaan*, the Land of Promiſe;

which Figure the Apoſtle St. *Paul* expreſly applies to us Chriſtians, 1 *Cor.* 10. To the ſame Effect the Prophet *Iſaias*, Chap. 24. v. 13, 14. likens thoſe that ſhall eſcape the Divine Vengance, to that ſmall Number of Olives that remain on the Tree after the Fruit is gather'd; or to the few Bunches of Grapes, that are found on the Vines after a well-glean'd Vintage. Ah! Chriſtians, hear then, and obey the Voice of your Saviour, when he tells you, St. *Luke* 13. v. 23. *Contend*, that is, ſtrive with all your Force *to enter in at the narrow Gate, for many I aſſure you ſhall ſeek to enter, and ſhall not be able:* Becauſe the Generality of Chriſtians, tho' they uſe ſome Endeavours to enter, yet don't *ſtrive* with all their Force; they are not thoroughly in earneſt in their ſeeking, and therefore ſhall never find. Hear again with Fear and Trembling the great Apoſtle St. *Peter*, when he tells you, that *if the Juſt will hardly be ſaved, where will the Sinner appear?* 1ſt. Epiſtle, Chap. 4. v. 18. O my Soul, let us then *take care*, as the ſame Apoſtle

ſtle admoniſhes, 2 *Pet.* 1. *by good Works to make our Election ſure*; and if others will go in Crowds to Hell, let us reſolve not to go with them for Company ſake.

Conſider, 3*dly*, The Sentiments of the holy Fathers upon this Subject, expreſſed in their Writings; but much more in their penitential Lives; and in that Fear, in which they lived and died, of the Judgments of God, which they knew to be very different from the Judgments of Men. Chriſtians, let the Sentiments of theſe Children of Light weigh more with us, than the vain and groundleſs Imaginations of deluded Worldlings, who cry out *Peace and Security*, when *ſudden Deſtruction is juſt lighting upon their Heads*. O! give ear for once to the great St. *John Chryſoſtome*, one of the chief Doctors of the Church of God, who made the Study of the Scripture his conſtant Employment, and was particularly aſſiſted by the Spirit of God, for the Underſtanding thereof; give ear, I ſay, to what he poſitively pronounces in one of his Sermons to the People of *Conſtantinople*, at that time the capital

capital City of the World, inhabited by many hundred Thouſands of Chriſtians, whoſe Lives in all Appearance were full as regular as ours are. "How many, "think ye, ſays he, will be ſaved in this "City? What I am going to ſay will "terrify you; but yet I muſt ſpeak it. "Of ſo many Thouſands there will "hardly one Hundred be ſaved: And I "doubt even of thoſe." So far the Saint. And are we, my Soul, in no Danger of being of the greater Number? Is our Life ſuch, as to afford any reaſonable Hopes, that if ſo very few be ſaved, we ſhall be of that happy Society?

Conſider, 4*thly*, That tho' the Scripture and Fathers had ſaid nothing of the ſmall Number of the Elect; yet that this Truth muſt appear evident to us, if we compare the Lives of the Generality of Chriſtians with the Goſpel of *Chriſt*, and his holy Commandments. *If thou wilt enter into Life*, ſays our Lord, *Mat.* 19. *keep the Commandments*: There is no other Way to Life everlaſting. And *the firſt* and *greateſt* of all the *Commandments* is this, *Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart*,

Heart, with all thy Soul, with all thy Mind, and with all thy Strength, Matt. 22. Now how few are there that keep this Commandment? 'Tis eaſy to *ſay*, with the Generality of Chriſtians, that we love God with our whole Heart; but what is the *Practice* of our Lives? Does not Self-love, Vain-glory, Senſuality, *&c.* on every Occaſion take Place of God? If ſo, 'tis in vain to ſay we *love him above all Things.* And yet, there is no Salvation without this Love. Think well of this. Beſides, the Apoſtle St. *James* declares, Chap. 4. v. 4. That *whoſoever will be a Friend of this World becomes an Enemy of God:* And St. *John*, Epiſt. 1. Chap. 2. v. 15. *If any one love the World, the Love of the Father is not in him.* And *Chriſt* himſelf declares, that *we cannot ſerve two Maſters*, Mat. 6. v. 24. How then can we think to reconcile the Conduct of the greateſt part of thoſe that call themſelves Chriſtians (whoſe whole Study is to pleaſe the World, and to conform themſelves to its falſe Maxims, corrupt Cuſtoms, and deluding Vanities) with their Expectation of the Kingdom of Heaven,

Heaven, which is not to be obtained but by uſing Violence upon ourſelves, by renouncing this ſinful World, and by a Life of Self-denial and Mortification?

Conſider, 5*thly*, How great a Corruption is generally found even amongſt the greateſt part of true believing Chriſtians, and from thence make a Judgment of their future Lot. How few are Proof againſt human Reſpects, and the pernicious Fear of *what the World will ſay*. Alas! What Numbers ſacrifice their eternal Salvation to this curſed Fear, by rather chuſing to forfeit the Grace of God, than the falſe Honour and Eſteem of this World! How many of thoſe, whoſe Birth and Fortune have advanc'd them above the Level of their fellow Mortals, live continually in the State of Damnation, by a curſed Diſpoſition of never putting up an Affront, and of preferring their worldly Honour before their Conſcience? Unhappy Men, who, by conforming themſelves now to thoſe falſe Maxims of deluded Worldlings, will be trampled under Foot by inſulting Devils for all Eternity! How few Maſters of Families are ſincerely

ſolli-

ſollicitous for thoſe under their Charge, to ſee that Inſtructions be not wanting, Devotions be not neglected, *&c.* and that nothing ſcandalous or ſinful lurk under the Favour of their Negligence or Connivance! and yet the Apoſtle aſſures us, that if any Man neglects the Care of his Family, he is worſe than an Infidel, 1 *Tim.* 5. v. 8. How few Parents effectually take care to bring up their Children from their Infancy in the Fear of God, and early to inſpire into them the Horror of Sin above all Evils! Ah! What a double Damnation will the greateſt part bring upon themſelves, by ſacrificing theſe tender Souls to the Devil and the World, which they might with ſo much Eaſe have conſecrated to Heaven! In fine, not to run over all States of Life in particular, is it not viſible that Injuſtice, Impurity, Pride, Detraction, *&c.* every-where reign amongſt Chriſtians, and that the Number of thoſe who live up to the Goſpel is very ſmall. Good God! have Mercy on us, and give us Grace to be of the Number of the few, that ſo we may be of the Number of the Saved.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIX.

On mortal Sin.

The Nineteenth DAY.

CONSIDER, *1ſt*, That there is not upon Earth, nor even in Hell itſelf, a Monſter more hideous, more filthy and abominable, than Sin: A Monſter, that is the firſt-born of the Devil; or, to ſpeak more properly, is the Parent both of the Devil and Hell. There was not in the whole Univerſe a Creature more beautiful, more perfect, more accompliſh'd with all kind of Gifts, both of Nature and Grace, than was that bright Angel *Lucifer* and his Companions: Yet one mortal Sin, and that only conſented to in Thought, chang'd them in an Inſtant into ugly Devils, juſt Objects of Horror and Abomination to God and Man. What Effect, think ye, will Sin have upon Man who is but Duſt and Aſhes, if it blaſts ſo fouly the Stars of Heaven? 'Twas this Monſter Sin, that caſt our firſt Parents out of Paradiſe, and condemn'd both them, and their Poſterity, to innumerable

merable Miſeries, and to both a temporal and eternal Death. 'Twas Sin drown'd the World with the Waters of the Flood; and daily crowds Hell with Millions of poor Souls, to be the Fuel of endleſs Flames. Good God! deliver us from this curſed Evil.

Conſider, 2*dly*, That Sin is the Death of the Soul. For as 'tis the Soul of a Man, which gives Life to his Body, and conſequently, that Body is dead, from which the Soul is gone; ſo 'tis the Grace of God, which is the Life of the Soul; and that Soul is dead, which by mortal Sin has loſt her God and his Grace. If, then, a dead Carcaſs, from which the Soul is gone, be ſo loathſome and frightful, that few could endure to paſs one Night in the ſame Bed with ſuch a Bed-fellow; how is it poſſible, unhappy Sinner, that thou canſt endure to carry continually about with thee a Carcaſs of a Soul dead in mortal Sin, which is far more loathſome and hideous? Ah! beg of God that he would open thy Eyes to ſee thy own deplorable State, to deteſt the helliſh Monſter Sin, which thou haſt ſo long nou-

riſh'd in thy Breaſt, and which is the true Cauſe of all thy Miſery.

Conſider, 3*dly*, What the Soul loſes by Sin; and what ſhe gains to recompenſe this Loſs. She loſes the Grace of God, the greateſt of all Treaſures; and in loſing this, ſhe loſes God himſelf. She loſes the fatherly Protection, and Favour of God; ſhe loſes the Dignity of Child of God, and Spouſe of *Chriſt*; ſhe loſes her Right and Title to an eternal Kingdom: She is ſtript of all the Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt, rob'd of all the Merits of her whole Life; becomes a Child of Hell, and a Slave of the Devil; Spiritually poſſeſs'd by him, and with him liable to an eternal Damnation: And this is all ſhe gains by Sin; becauſe *the Wages of Sin is Death*, Rom. 6. the Death of the Soul here, and a ſecond and eternal Death hereafter. Ah! wretched Sinners, open your Eyes to ſee, and bewail your lamentable Blindneſs, in thus exchanging God for the Devil, Heaven for Hell.

Conſider, 4*thly*, That Sin is infinitely odious and deteſtable in the Sight of God, as being infinitely oppoſite to his

ſove-

ſoveraign Goodneſs. He hates it with an eternal and neceſſary Hatred; and can no more ceaſe to hate it, than he can ceaſe to be God. Hence if the juſteſt Man upon Earth were ſo unhappy, as to fall into any one the leaſt mortal Sin, he would in that ſame Moment become the Enemy of God; and if he were to die in that Guilt, would certainly feel the Weight of God's avenging Juſtice for all Eternity. Ah! Chriſtians, never let us be ſo mad as to venture to be at War with God. Alas! how many, and how dreadful Judgments does he daily exerciſe upon Sin, and Sinners? How many, in Puniſhment of Sin, are ſnatch'd away in the Flower of their Age, by ſudden and unprovided Death? How many die in Deſpair? How many, after having long abuſed God's Graces, are given up to a reprobate Senſe, to a Hardneſs of Heart, the worſt and moſt terrible of all his Judgments? Oh! let us tremble at the Thoughts of ſo great a Misfortune: Let us be convinc'd, that there can be no Miſery ſo great as that which we incur by mortal Sin; and that we are more

our own Enemies, and do ourſelves more Miſchief, by conſenting to any one mortal Sin, than all Men upon Earth, and all the Devils in Hell could do us, tho' they were all to conſpire together to do their worſt: Becauſe all that they can do, as long as we don't conſent to Sin, cannot hurt the Soul; whereas we ourſelves, by conſenting to any one mortal Sin, bring upon our own Souls a dreadful and eternal Death. Good God! never ſuffer us to be ſo blind, as to become thus the Murderers of our own Souls.

Conſider, 5*thly*, O! my Soul, and tremble at the Sight of that Multitude of Treaſons againſt thy God, by which thou haſt ſo often provoked his Indignation in the whole Courſe of thy Life. Alas! is it not too true, that thou no ſooner didſt come to the Uſe of Reaſon, than thou abandonedſt thy King and thy God, under the Wings of whoſe fatherly Protection thou hadſt happily paſs'd the Days of thy Innocence? Ah! how early didſt thou run away from the beſt of Fathers, and like the prodigal Child, ſquandering away thy Sub-

Subſtance in a ſtrange Land, ſoughtſt in vain to ſatisfy thy Appetite with the Huſks of Swine. Paſs over in thy Remembrance, in the Bitterneſs of thy Soul, all the Years of thy Life; and ſee what Treaſures of Iniquity in Thought, Word, and Deed, will diſcover themſelves to thy Eyes: See how long thou haſt unconcernedly ſported thyſelf on the Brink of a dreadful Precipice, having no more than a Hair's Breadth betwixt thy Soul and Hell. Be confounded at thy paſt Folly; admire and adore the Goodneſs of thy God; and now at leaſt reſolve to embrace his Mercy.

CHAP. XX.

On the relapſing Sinner.

The Twentieth DAY.

CONSIDER, *1ſt*, That if any one mortal Sin be ſo heinous a Treaſon againſt the ſoveraign Majeſty of God, as we have ſeen in the foregoing

Chapter; if every ſuch Sin be an Abomination to our Lord, and the Death of the Soul of that unhappy Sinner, who is guilty of it; what muſt we think of the miſerable Condition of *relapſing Sinners*, that is, of ſuch Chriſtians, who are continually falling again and again into the ſame mortal Sins, after their repeated Confeſſions and ſolemn Promiſes of Amendment? Alas! what can we think, but that by this Method of Life they are treaſuring up to themſelves Wrath againſt the Day of Wrath; and will in all Appearance, ſooner or later, draw down a dreadful Vengeance upon their own Heads? Becauſe by every Relapſe their Crime is aggravated, and their latter Condition becomes worſe than the former.

Conſider, 2*dly*, The Ingratitude, the Perfidiouſneſs, the Contempt of God, which the relapſing Sinner is guilty of, as often as, after his Reconciliation, he returns like a Dog to the Vomit. He is guilty of the higheſt Ingratitude, in treading under Foot the Grace of Reconciliation, by which he had been a little before rais'd from the Dunghil of Sin,

Sin, and even drawn out of the Jaws of Hell; and by a diſtinguiſhing Mercy reſtored to the Friendſhip of God, to the Dignity of Child of God, and Heir of Heaven. He is guilty of a baſe Perfidiouſneſs, in breaking his ſolemn Word given to God in his Confeſſions. He is guilty of a notorious Contempt of the Divine Majeſty, in baniſhing God from his Soul, after having invited him in, and introducing Satan in his Place; and this after a full Knowledge and Experience of both Sides. Good God! to put the whole Univerſe in Ballance with thee, would be a moſt heinous Affront; ſince Heaven, and all the Powers thereof, the Earth and Seas, and all Things therein, are leſs than a Grain of Sand, if compared to thee: What then muſt we think of the unparallel'd Injury done thee by the relapſing Sinner, when putting thee and Satan in the Scales, he gives the Preference to the Devil?

Conſider, 3*dly*, The dreadful Danger, to which the relapſing Sinner is daily expoſed, from the Sword of the Divine Juſtice hanging over his guilty Head, and daily provoked by his Ingratitude

and Inſolence. Alas! we are all mortal: We neither know the Day nor the Hour, that will be our laſt; if we be ſurpriſed by Death in the State of mortal Sin, as Millions have been, we are irrecoverably loſt. If then it be a Madneſs at any time to riſk Eternity, by conſenting to a mortal Sin; how much more to provoke the Almighty by frequent Relapſes, and by a Practice of abuſing his Graces and Mercy at every turn? Ah! what Multitudes of Souls have been thus betrayed into that diſmal Pit of never-ending Woe, where the Worm never dies, and the Fire never is quench'd! Unhappy Wretches! they deſign'd as little to damn themſelves, as any of us; but God will not be laugh'd at.

Conſider, 4*thly*, Another Evil which the Sinner, who frequently falls back into the ſame Sins, has too juſt Reaſon to apprehend, which is the Inſincerity of his paſt Repentance. For, in reality, what Appearance is there that his Sorrow and Reſolution of Amendment have been ſuch as God requires, when after ſo many Confeſſions he is ſtill the ſame Man? True

True Contrition is a ſoveraign Grief, by which the Penitent deteſts his Sin above all other Evils, with a full Determination, and firm Reſolution of never returning to it more. Now how is it likely, that the relapſing Sinner deteſts ſincerely his Sin above all Evils, with a firm Purpoſe of Amendment, when he is ſo ſoon, ſo eaſily prevail'd upon by the firſt Temptations to return to it again?

Conſider, 5*thly*, The Remedies and Means, by which we are to be preſerv'd from this pernicious Evil of relapſing into mortal Sin. The firſt is to avoid the dangerous Occaſions, which have, or probably may draw us into the ſame Sins: Without this Care to fly the Occaſions of Sin, the ſtrongeſt Reſolutions of Amendment will prove ineffectual, as we daily ſee by woeful Experience: For *he that loves the Danger ſhall periſh in it*, Eccl. 3. No Pretexts of worldly Concern muſt here be put in Ballance with Eternity: We muſt part with Hand or Eye, ſooner than loſe our Souls. Another main Preſervative againſt Relapſe, is to labour by fervent Prayer, and diligent frequenting of the Sacraments,

to ſuppreſs the unhappy Diſpoſitions that inſenſibly lead thereunto; vigorouſly to reſiſt the firſt Motions to Evil; and to ſtrive with all poſſible Diligence to root out that wretched Propenſion to Sin, which former Sins have left in the Soul. Ah! how hard is it to maintain a Caſtle, where the Enemy has already ſurpris'd the Avenues, and has a ſtrong Party within, ready to open the Gates unto him? The third and chief Remedy againſt Relapſe, is for the Penitent carefully to nouriſh in his Heart a truly penitential Spirit, daily to renew his Sorrow for his Sins, and to recount in the Sight of God, in the Bitterneſs of his Soul, all his paſt Iniquities; daily to admire and adore that Mercy, which bore with him ſo long, and to value above all Treaſures that Grace of Reconciliation, by which he has been drawn out of ſo much Miſery; daily to beg of God, with all the Fervour of his Soul, ſooner to take him out of this World, than to ſuffer him any more to die to him by mortal Sin. Good God! grant that this may be always the Diſpoſition of our Souls. *Amen, Amen.*

CHAP.

CHAP. XXI.

On doing Penance for our Sins.

The Twenty-firſt DAY.

CONSIDER, *1ſt*, Thoſe Words of *Chriſt*, *Luke* 13. v. 3, 5. *Except you do Penance you ſhall all periſh.* Behold here a general Rule, nor does our Lord make any Exception. Penance then is neceſſary, *1ſt*, for all thoſe, whoſe Conſcience accuſes them of mortal Sin; alas! ſuch as theſe muſt either do Penance for their Sins, or burn for them for all Eternity. Poor Sinners! their State is moſt deplorable! They are playing upon the Brink of Hell, and every Moment one or other of them is tumbling down into that bottomleſs Pit; and is it poſſible, they ſhould be unconcern'd under ſo great and evident a Danger? Why then do they not lay hold of the Grace of Penance, the only Plank that can ſave them after Shipwreck; the only Means left for the Salvation of their Souls?

2*dly*, Penance is neceſſary for all thoſe who, tho' their Conſcience accuſes them not at preſent, yet have in their paſt Life been guilty of ſuch mortal Offences. Ah! Chriſtians, any one mortal Sin is enough for us to do Penance for all our Life. And how can we do leſs, if we conſider what mortal Sin is; what it is to have been the Enemies of God; what it is to have been under the Sentence of eternal Damnation; and never certainly to know whether this Sentence has been cancel'd? Is not this ſufficient to oblige us to a penitential Life? Can we otherwiſe pretend to be ſecure? Even thoſe (and God beſt knows how few they are) who are not conſcious to themſelves of having committed any ſuch Sin in their whole Life-time, muſt not therefore think themſelves exempt from the Obligation of doing Penance; as well becauſe of their hidden Sins, as thoſe which they may have occaſion'd in others; for *no Man knows whether he be worthy of Love or Hatred*, Eccl. 8. 9. as alſo becauſe a penitential Life is the beſt Security againſt Sin, which will inſenſibly prevail over us, if

not

not curb'd by Self-denial, Mortification, and Penance.

Conſider, 2*dly*, That as to the Method of Penance, different Rules muſt be preſcrib'd to different Perſons. Thoſe who have the Misfortune to be actually in the State of mortal Sin, or, what is ſtill more deplorable, are plung'd in the Depth of a Habit of one or more kinds of mortal Sins, as ſoon as their Eyes are open'd to diſcover the helliſh Monſter, which they carry about with them, muſt, like the prodigal Child, ariſe without Delay to return to their Father. A Sacrifice of a contrite and humble Heart is what God above all Things calls for at their hands; this ought to be the Foundation of all their Penance: Without this, corporal Auſterities will be of ſmall account. Such Sinners ought to give themſelves no Reſt, till they have made their Peace with their God: Their Sins ought to be always before their Eyes. Their firſt Thoughts in the Morning ought to be upon their Misfortune, in being at ſo great a diſtance from their God, enſlaved to the Devil, and liable to be his Companions in eternal Miſe-

ry:

ry: The like ought to be their laſt Thoughts at Night; when, like the penitent *David*, they ought to waſh their Beds with their Tears. As often as they appear before their God in Prayer, it ought to be in the Spirit of the humble Publican, looking upon themſelves unworthy to lift up their Eyes to Heaven, or towards the Altar of God; and with him, ſtriking their Breaſts, with a *Lord, be merciful to me a Sinner.* Thus will they certainly obtain Mercy, from him who is the Father of Mercy.

Conſider, 3*dly*, That after the Sinner has done his Endeavours to ſeek a Reconciliation with his offended God, by a ſincere Repentance, and Confeſſion of his Sins, he muſt not think himſelf exempt from any further Penance; as if he had now no Debt to diſcharge to the Juſtice of God, no Obligation of making Atonement for his Sins, by penitential Works, and of bringing forth Fruits worthy of Penance. This would be a great and dangerous Error. Nor muſt he content himſelf with barely acquitting himſelf of the Penance enjoyn'd by his Confeſſor, which 'tis to be fear'd

ſeldom

ſeldom is ſufficient to ſatisfy fully the Juſtice of God. Alas! if Sinners were truly ſenſible of the enormous Injury done to God by mortal Sin, as true Penitents muſt be, they would certainly do Penance in another Manner, than too many do; they would be more in earneſt in chaſtizing their own ſinful Fleſh by penitential Works, and thus making a proportionable Atonement to God for their paſt Treaſons.

Conſider, 4*thly*, That the true Manner of doing Penance for our Sins, is better learnt from the holy Fathers and Doctors of the Church, than from the looſe Maxims of Worldlings, or the Practice of too many Penitents in this degenerate Age. Let us give Ear then to theſe Lights of the Church, and follow their Directions on this important Subject. "God himſelf has taught "us, ſays St. *Cyprian* [*L. de Lapſis*] in "what Manner we are to crave Mer-"cy of him. He himſelf ſays, *Return* "*to me with your whole Heart, in Faſt-*"*ing, and Weeping, and Mourning*, Joel. "2. Let us then return to the Lord "with our whole Heart; let us ap-

"peaſe

" peaſe his Wrath by Faſting, Weeping, " and Mourning, as he admoniſhes us. --- " Let the Greatneſs of our Grief equal " the Heinouſneſs of our Sins ---- we " muſt pray earneſtly; we muſt paſs " the Day in Mourning, and the Night " in Watching and Weeping, ſpending " all our Time in penitential Tears. " Our Lodging ſhould be on the Floor " ſtrew'd with Aſhes, our Covering " Hair-cloth, *&c.* After having caſt off " the Garment of *Chriſt*, we ſhould " not now ſeek any (worldly) Cloath- " ing----We muſt employ ourſelves now " in good Works, by which our Sins " may be purged away. We muſt give " frequent Alms, by which our Souls " may be delivered from Death." So far St. *Cyprian.* With whom agrees St. *Pacian*, in his Exhortation to Penance. " If any one call you to the " Bagnio, you muſt renounce all ſuch " Delights. If any one invite you to " a Banquet, you muſt ſay, ſuch Invi- " tations are for thoſe that have not " had the Misfortune to loſe their God. " I have ſin'd againſt the Lord, and " am in Danger of periſhing eternally: " What

" What have I to do with Feaſts, that " have offended my God? You muſt " make your Court to the Poor; you " muſt beg the Prayers of Widows; " you muſt caſt yourſelf at the Feet of " the Prieſts; you muſt implore the " Interceſſion of the Church; you " muſt try all Means, which may pre- " vent your periſhing everlaſtingly." And St. *Ambroſe*, in his ſecond Book of Penance, Chap. 10. " Can any one " imagine that he is doing Penance, " whilſt he is indulging his Ambition in " the Purſuit of Honours, whilſt he is " following Wine? *&c.* The true Pe- " nitent muſt renounce the World, muſt " abridge even the neceſſary Time of " Sleep, muſt interrupt it with his " Sighs, and cut it ſhort with his " Prayers." And St. *Cæſarius* of *Arles*, Hom. 8. " As often as we viſit the " Sick, or thoſe that are in Priſon, or " reconcile together thoſe that are at " variance one with another; as of- " ten as we faſt on Days commanded " by the Church ---- give Alms to the " Poor, that paſs by our Door, *&c.* by " theſe, and ſuch like Works, our ſmall

" Sins

" Sins are daily redeemed. But this " alone is not enough for capital Crimes; " we muſt add Tears and Lamentations, " and long Faſts; and give large Alms " to the utmoſt of our Power." Thus, as the ſame Saint tells us, Hom. 1. " By preſent Mortification will be pre- " vented the future Sentence of eternal " Death; thus, by humbling the Guilty, " will the Guilt be conſumed: And by " this voluntary Severity, the Wrath of " the dreadful Judge will be appeas'd---- " Theſe ſhort penitential Labours will " pay off thoſe vaſt Debts, which other- " wiſe everlaſting Burning would never " have diſcharged." Chriſtians, let us follow in Practice theſe excellent Guides.

CHAP. XXII.

Againſt Delay of Repentance.

The Twenty-ſecond DAY.

CONSIDER, 1*ſt*, That of all the Deceits of Satan, by which he deludes

deludes poor Sinners to their eternal Ruin, there is none greater, or more dangerous than this; by which, he perſwades them to put off their Repentance and Converſion from time to time, till there is no more time for them. Alas! Thouſands and Millions of poor Souls have been thus betray'd into everlaſting Flames, who never deſign'd to damn themſelves by dying in Sin, any more than any one of us at preſent does: But, by putting off their Converſion, they have by a juſt Judgment of God been ſurpris'd by Death, when they leaſt expected it; and, dying as they lived, have been juſtly ſentenced to that ſecond and everlaſting Death: Unhappy Wretches! who would not believe their juſt Judge, who ſo often warns them in the Goſpel to watch; and declares to them, that otherwiſe he ſhall come at a time when they leaſt expect him. Ah! how dreadful, and how common are theſe unprovided Deaths?

Conſider, 2*dly*, The great Preſumption of Sinners, who put off their Reconciliation with an offended God till another time, ſhutting their Ears to his

his Voice, by which he calls them at preſent; and refuſing him the Entrance of their Heart, where he ſtands and knocks. Alas! if he withdraws himſelf, they are undone for ever: How dare they then treat him with ſo much Contempt? Is it not an infinite Goodneſs, an inexpreſſible Condeſcenſion in this ſoveraign Majeſty to call after them, when they are running from him; and ſo earneſtly to preſs them, without any Intereſt on his ſide, to return to him, who is their only Good, and only Happineſs? What then ought they not to apprehend from his Juſtice, if they obſtinately and inſolently refuſe to embrace his Mercy? How dare they pretend to diſpoſe of the Time to come, or promiſe themſelves greater Graces hereafter, than thoſe which they now abuſe? Do they not know that God alone is Maſter of Time and Grace; and that by his juſt Judgment thoſe who preſume to tempt him in this Manner, generally ſpeaking, die in their Sins? Ah! 'tis too true, that he, who has promiſed Pardon to the Sinner that is ſincerely converted, has neither promiſed Time

Time nor efficacious Grace to thoſe who defer their Converſion.

Conſider, 3*dly*, The great Folly of Sinners, who put off their Converſion to God till another time, upon Pretence of doing it more eaſily hereafter: Whereas, both Reaſon and Experience make it evident, that the longer they defer this Work, the harder it is to bring it about. And how can it be otherwiſe, ſince by this Delay, and by adding daily Sin to Sin, their ſinful Habits grow daily ſtronger, the Devil's Power over them increaſes; and God Almighty, who is daily more and more provoked, by degrees, is leſs liberal of his Graces, ſo that they become leſs frequent and leſs preſſing; till at length, by accuſtoming themſelves to reſiſt God's Grace, they fall into the wretched State of Blindneſs and Hardneſs of Heart, the very broad Road of final Impenitence.

Conſider, 4*thly*, The unparallel'd Madneſs of thoſe who defer their Converſion upon the Confidence of a Death-bed Repentance; deſigning to put a Cheat upon God's Juſtice, by indulging themſelves in Sin all their Life-time; and

and then making their Peace with God, when they can ſin no longer. Unhappy Wretches! that will not conſider that *God is not to be jeſted with: That what a Man ſoweth, the ſame ſhall he reap*, Gal. 6. v. 6. The general Rule is, that as a Man lives, ſo he dies. A Rule ſo general, that in the whole Scripture we have but one Example of a Perſon that died well after a wicked Life, *viz.* of the good Thief; an Example ſo ſingular in all its Circumſtances, as to give no Kind of Encouragement to ſuch Sinners, who entertain a premeditated Deſign of giving the ſlip to God's Juſtice by a Death-bed Converſion. Ah! how dreadfully difficult muſt it be for a dying Sinner, in whom the Habit of Sin by long Cuſtom is turned into a ſecond Nature, to attain to that thorough Change of Heart, that ſincere Sorrow and Deteſtation of Sin above all Evils, that Love of God above all Things, which he never thought of in his Life-time; and which now at leaſt is certainly neceſſary. Ah! how deceitful too often are thoſe Tears, which are ſhed by dying Sinners, (as we ſee in the Caſe of King

King *Antiochus)* which being wholly influenced by the Fear of Death prevail not with the juſt Judge. And if there be ſo much Danger, even when Tears are plentifully ſhed; what muſt there be, when, as it commonly happens, either the Dullneſs and Stupidity cauſed by the Sickneſs, or the Pains and Agonies of the Body and Mind, are ſo great, as to hinder any ſerious Application of the Thoughts, to the greateſt of all our Concerns? For if a little Head-ach be enough to hinder us from being able to pray with any Devotion, what muſt the Agonies of Death be? No wonder then, that the Saints and Servants of God make ſo little account of theſe Death-bed Performances: Eſpecially ſince, as we ſee by daily Experience, thoſe who have made the greateſt ſhew of Repentance, when they were in Danger of Death, have no ſooner eſcaped that Danger, but are ſtill the ſame Men they were before. O Chriſtians, let us not then be impoſed upon by the falſe and flattering Diſcourſes of Men, who are ſo free in pronouncing favourably of all thoſe, who, after a Life ſpent in Sin, make ſome ſhew

of

of Repentance at their Death. Let us rather tremble at the deplorable Caſe of ſuch Souls; and remember, that God's Judgments are very different from thoſe of Men.

CHAP. XXIII.

On Time and Eternity.

The Twenty-third DAY.

CONSIDER, 1*ſt*, How precious a Thing Time is, which we are apt to ſquander away, as if it were of no value. Time is the meaſure of our Lives; and as much as we loſe of our Time, ſo much of our Lives is abſolutely loſt. All our Time is given us in order for to gain Eternity: And there is not one Moment of our Time, in which we may not work for Eternity, and in which we may not ſtore up immenſe Treaſures for a happy Eternity: As many, therefore, as we loſe of theſe precious Moments, they are ſo many loſt Eternities. This preſent

ſent Time is the only Time of working; 'tis the only Time we can call our own, and God only knows how long it will be ſo. It is ſhort, it flies away in an inſtant, and when once it is gone, it cannot be recall'd; the very Moment in which we are reading this Line is juſt paſſing, never, never more to return. Every Hour is poſting away without ſtopping one Moment, till it be ſwallow'd up in the immenſe Gulph of Eternity: And as many of theſe Hours or Moments as are loſt, are loſt for ever; the Loſs is irreparable. Learn hence, O my Soul, to ſet a juſt Value upon thy preſent Time; learn to huſband it well, by employing it in good Works.

Conſider, 2*dly*, Chriſtian Soul, what thy Thoughts will be, at the Approach of Death, of the Value of this Time, which thou makeſt ſo little of at preſent. What wouldſt thou not then give for ſome of thoſe Hours, which thou loſeſt now in Vanity and Sin? Ah! the dreadful Anguiſh that will rack the Soul of the dying Sinner, when ſeeing himſelf at the Brink of a miſerable Eternity, he ſhall wiſh a thouſand times,

but all in vain, that he could but call back one Day, or even one Hour of his Time paſt, and had but the ſame Health and Strength as he formerly had, to employ it in the Love of God, and ſincere Repentance for his Sins. Ah! Worldlings, why will you then be ſo blind as not to ſee, that any one of theſe Hours, which you daily ſquander away, is indeed more valuable than ten thouſand Worlds?

Conſider, 3*dly*, What will be the Sentiments of the Damn'd in Hell of the Value of Time, when Time ſhall be no more: How bitterly they ſhall regret for all Eternity, all thoſe Hours, Days, Months, and Years, which were allow'd them by the Bounty of their Creator, during the Space of their mortal Life; by the due Employment of which, they might have prevented that Miſery, to which they are now irrevocably condemn'd; and might have made themſelves eternally and infinitely happy: But alas! they would not work whilſt the Time was, whilſt they had the Day-light before them; the Night, the diſmal and eternal Night is now come, in which it is too late to work; and during which, they

they ſhall eternally condemn their paſt Folly and Madneſs, in neglecting and abuſing their precious Time. Ah! Chriſtians, let us be wiſe at their Expence. But what do you think will be the Sentiments of the Bleſſed in Heaven of this precious Time? Truly, if it were poſſible, and if their happy State could admit of ſuch a Thing as Grief, there is nothing thoſe bleſſed Souls would regret more than the Loſs of any of thoſe Moments, which in their Life-time had not been well huſbanded; when they ſhall clearly ſee, in the Light of God, what an immenſe Increaſe of Glory and Happineſs they might have acquired, by the due Employment of thoſe precious Moments.

Conſider, 4*thly*, That as all Time is ſhort, and paſſes quickly away, ſo all temporal Enjoyments, Honours, Riches, and Pleaſures of this World, are all tranſitory, uncertain and inconſtant. Only Eternity, and the Goods or Evils which it comprizes, are truly great, as being without End, without Change, without Compariſon; admitting of no Mixture of Evil in its Goods, nor any Allay of Comfort in its Evils. O! the Vanity of all

temporal Grandeur, which muſt ſo ſoon be buried in the Coffin. O! how quickly does the Glory of this World paſs away? A few ſhort Years are more than any one can promiſe himſelf: And after that, poor Sinner, what will become of thee? Alas! the Worms will prey upon thy Body, and mercileſs Devils on thy unrepenting Soul. Thy worldly Friends will forget thee: The very Stones, on which thou haſt got thy Name engraved, will not long out-live thee. O! how true is that Sentence, *Vanity of Vanities, and all is Vanity: But to love God, and ſerve him alone?* A Kempis. 'Tis thus only we ſhall be wiſe for Eternity; all other Wiſdom is but Folly.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXIV.

On the Preſence of GOD.

The Twenty-fourth DAY.

CONSIDER, *1ſt*, That God is every-where. *If I aſcend into Heaven*, ſays the *Pſalmiſt*, Pſ. 138. *thou art there; if I deſcend into Hell, thou art there.* He fills both Heaven and Earth; and there is no created Thing whatſoever, in which he is not truly and perfectly preſent. In him we live, in him we move, our very Being is in him. As the Birds, where-ever they fly, meet with the Air, which encompaſſes them on all ſides; and the Fiſhes ſwimming in the Ocean every-where meet with the Waters; ſo we, where-ever we are, or where-ever we go, meet with God; we have him always with us; he is more intimately preſent to our very Souls, than our Souls are to our Bodies. Alas! poor Soul of mine, how little have we thought of this? And yet 'tis an Article of our Faith, in which we have been inſtructed from the very Cradle. Let us ſeriouſly reflect

on this Truth for the future: Let us ſtrive to be always with him, who is always with us.

Conſider, 2*dly*, That God being every-where, ſees us where-ever we are; all our Actions are done in his Sight; our very Thoughts, even the moſt ſecret Motions and Diſpoſitions of our Hearts, cannot be concealed from his all-ſeeing Eye. In vain does the Sinner flatter himſelf in his Crimes, like the Libertine mention'd by the Wiſe Man, *Eccl.* 23. that *Darkneſs encompaſſes him, and Walls cover him, and no one ſees him whom he fears.* Alas! *the Eyes of the Lord are infinitely brighter than the Rays of the Sun*; and no Darkneſs, no Clouds, no Walls or Curtains can keep out his piercing Sight, which clearly ſees the very Centre of the Soul: And no wonder that he ſhould clearly ſee what paſſes there, where he is always preſent.

Conſider, 3*dly*, That God, who is in all Places, and in all Things, is every-where whole and entire, becauſe he is indiviſible; he is every-where with all his Majeſty, with all his Attributes, with all his Perfections. We have then within us, my Soul, the Eternal, Immenſe, Omnipotent,

potent, Self-exiſtent, Infinite Lord and Maker of all Things; and we are within this infinite Being; where-ever we go, we have him with us. He is every-where with his Omnipotence, to which all Things are ſubject; what then have his Friends to fear? He is every-where with his infinite Juſtice; how then can his Enemies be ſecure? He is every-where infinitely Good to his Children, his Love and Kindneſs to them ſurpaſſes that of the moſt tender Mother: He watches over them with his Providence; his Wiſdom wonderfully diſpoſes of all Things for their greater Good: What Comfort then muſt this Thought of the Preſence of God afford his Servants, and thoſe that truly fear and love him?

Conſider, 4*thly*, That God, being every-where, requires of us that we ſhould every-where take Notice of his Preſence. Can there be an Object more worthy of our Attention? And ſhall we then be ſo unfortunately blind, as to amuſe ourſelves about every Trifle that comes in our way; and let our God, the ſoveraign Beauty and ſoveraign Good, paſs unregarded? Ah! let us never regret our being alone, ſince

ſince we have always in our Company that infinite Being, the Sight and Enjoyment of which is the eternal Felicity of Angels. What if we ſee him not with the Eyes of the Body, is he the leſs preſent? And have we not within us other more noble Eyes, *viz.* the Eyes of the Underſtanding, which, aſſiſted by Divine Faith, may and ought to contemplate their God, always preſent in the very midſt of us? Ah! the ſweeteſt Repoſe is to be found in him; all other Recreations are vain, if compared to this.

Conſider, 5*thly*, That God, being everywhere preſent, requires of us that we ſhould comport ourſelves, both as to the Interior and Exterior, in ſuch Manner, as becomes thoſe who are ſtanding in his Sight. The Preſence of a Perſon, for whom we have a Reſpect, is enough to put a Reſtraint upon us from doing any Thing that is light and indecent: And ſhall not the infinite Majeſty of God, in compariſon with whom the greateſt Monarchs of the Earth are leſs than nothing, by his Preſence keep us in that exterior Modeſty and interior Reverence, which may pleaſe his Eyes? Ought we not even to annihilate

hilate ourſelves in the Sight of this immenſe Divinity? But, O good God, how far are we from theſe Diſpoſitions, as often as we dare to ſin in thy Almighty Preſence, and fly in the Face of thy ſoveraign Majeſty? Alas! my poor Soul, how ſhould we be aſhamed to have our Sins known to ſuch and ſuch Perſons, whoſe Eſteem we covet? We ſhould be ready even to die with Confuſion to have them publiſh'd to the whole World. We ſhould be very unwilling to have even our vain and ridiculous Amuſements, tho' otherwiſe innocent, laid open to the Eyes of our Neighbours. And why will we not conſider the all-ſeeing Eye of our great God, which is always upon us, which clearly diſcerns all that paſſes in the moſt ſecret Cloſet of our Heart? Why will we not reflect, that our evil Thoughts being known to God, is indeed a greater Shame, a greater Loſs of our true Honour, than if they were publiſh'd by Sound of Trumpet over the Univerſe.

Conſider, 6*thly*, That God, being every-where preſent, every-where requires our Love: He is every-where infinitely Amiable infinitely Beautiful, infinitely Good, infinitely Perfect: And where-ever we

are,

are, he is infinitely Good to us. Why then don't we love him? He is all Love, *Deus Charitas eſt*, ſays St. *John*, 1 *Jo.* 4. *God is Love.* We have this loving and moſt lovely God always with us, and always in us; why don't we run to his Embraces? He is a Fire that ever burns; this Fire is in the very Centre of our Souls; how then come we to feel ſo little of its Flames? 'Tis becauſe we will not ſtand by it. 'Tis becauſe we will not keep our Souls at home, attentive to that great Gueſt who reſides within us, but let them continually wander abroad upon vain created Amuſements. O! *Convertere, anima mea, in requiem tuam*, Pſ. 144. Turn away, my Soul, from all theſe worldly Toys, which keep thee from thy God; and return to him thy true and only Happineſs, and in him repoſe for ever.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXV.

On the Paſſion of Chriſt: *And firſt, on our Saviour in the Garden of* Gethſemani.

The Twenty-fifth DAY.

CONSIDER, *1ſt*, How the Son of God, who came down from Heaven, and cloath'd himſelf with our Humanity, in order to be our Prieſt and our Victim, and to offer himſelf a bleeding Sacrifice for our Sins to his eternal Father, was pleaſed to begin his Paſſion by a bloody Sweat and Agony, in the Garden of *Gethſemani*, the Night before his Death. Here having left the reſt of his Diſciples at ſome diſtance, and taking with him *Peter*, *James* and *John*, who before had been Witneſſes of his glorious Transfiguration on Mount *Thabor*, he begins to diſcloſe to them that mortal Anguiſh, Fear and Sadneſs, which oppreſſed his Heart. *My Soul*, ſaith he, *is ſad even unto Death*, Mat. 26. that is, with a Sadneſs, which even now would ſtrike me dead, if I did not preſerve myſelf, in order to ſuffer ſtill more for you. Sweet

Jeſus,

Jeſus, what can be the meaning of this? Didſt thou not lately cry out, ſpeaking of thy Paſſion, and the Deſire that thou hadſt of ſuffering for us; *I have a Baptiſm, wherewith I am to be baptized, and how am I ſtreighten'd till it be accompliſh'd*, Luke 12. Whence then comes this preſent *Sadneſs?* Was it not thou, who haſt given that Strength and Courage to thy Martyrs, as not even to ſhrink under the worſt of Torments? And art thou thyſelf *afraid?* But, O dear Lord, I plainly underſtand that it was by thy own Choice, that thou haſt condeſcended ſo far, as to let thyſelf be ſeized by this mortal Anguiſh: 'Twas for my Inſtruction; and that thou mightſt ſuffer ſo much the more for me. I adore thee under this Weakneſs (if I may be allow'd to call it ſo) no leſs than on thy Throne of Glory; becauſe it is here, that I better diſcover thy infinite Love for me.

Conſider, 2*dly*, That our Saviour, whoſe Soul ever enjoy'd the beatifick Viſion of the Divinity, could not have been capable of this exceſſive Sadneſs and Anguiſh, had he not by Miracle ſtopt the Communication between the ſupreme and

and inferior Part of his Soul; and ſo abandon'd the inferior Part to all thoſe Griefs, Fears and Agonies, which the lively Repreſentation of ſo many, and ſo great Evils, would naturally produce. So that we are to conſider him here in this, as well as in all the reſt of the Stages of his Paſſion, ſuffering in the ſame Manner, as if he were a pure Man, of a tender and delicate Complexion of Body, and liable to all our Pains and Miſeries, excepting Sin. Thus, as deſirous of Company, (a Thing natural to Sadneſs and Fear) he ſays to his Diſciples, *Stay here and watch with me*, Matt. 26. What a Surprize muſt it have been to theſe three Apoſtles, to hear this new Language from their Maſter, and to ſee him all pale, and in a cold Sweat with extreme Anguiſh? And thou, ſweet *Jeſus*, how much art thou to be pitied under theſe Floods of Grief; when thou art reduced ſo low, as to be forced to ſeek for Comfort from thy poor Diſciples, whoſe whole Support and Comfort was wont to be from thee? Alas! how little Service will their Company do thee now, who will be aſleep whilſt thou art in thy

bloody Agony, and will run away when thou art led to be crucified for their Sins?

Conſider, 3*dly*, How our dear Saviour under this Anguiſh and Sadneſs betakes himſelf to Prayer, the only ſure Refuge under all Afflictions, the only Shield in the Day of Battle. But take notice, my Soul, with what Reverence he prays to his eternal Father, proſtrate on the very Ground; with what Fervour; *with a loud Cry and Tears*, ſays the Apoſtle, *Heb.* 5. v. 7; and learn to imitate him. In this Prayer he condeſcended ſo far, as to allow the inferior Part to petition, that the Cup of his bitter Paſſion might be removed from him: But then he immediately added; *yet not my Will, but thine be done.* To teach us, under all Trials and Croſſes, a perfect Submiſſion and Reſignation to the Divine Will.

Conſider, 4*thly*, How our Saviour made two Interruptions in his Prayer to come and viſit his Diſciples, but found them both times aſleep. Ah! my Soul, is it not thy Caſe, like theſe Apoſtles, to ſleep, that is, to indulge thyſelf in a ſlothful, ſenſual way of living; whereas, the whole Life of thy Saviour was ſpent in labour-

ing for thy Salvation; and all that he now ſuffers, he ſuffers for thee. Ah! pity now at leaſt his comfortleſs Condition, whilſt on the one hand his Father ſeems deaf to his Prayers, and on the other hand his Diſciples are too drouſy to give any Attention to him. In this deſolate State an Angel from Heaven appears to comfort him, who is the Joy of Angels. O! what Humility! But what kind of Comfort, think you, did this Angel bring? No other to be ſure, but the repreſenting to him the Will of his eternal Father, and humbly intreating him, in the Name of Heaven and Earth, not to decline the imparting to poor Sinners by his infinite Love that plentiful Redemption, for which he came into the World; and to undergo the Ignominies and Torments of one ſhort Day's Continuance, in Proſpect of the Salvation of Mankind, and of that eternal Glory and Honour, which the Godhead ſhould receive from all his Sufferings. Let the like Conſiderations of God's Will, his greater Honour and Glory, and the Good of thy own Soul, comfort thee

alſo under all thy Anguiſh and Croſſes: There can be no more ſolid Comfort.

Conſider, *5thly*, The mortal Agony which our Saviour ſuffered in his Soul, during the Prayer of this Night. We may judge of the Pangs and Anguiſh of his Soul, by the wonderful Effect they produced in his Body, by caſting him into that prodigious Sweat of Blood to ſuch Degree, as to imbrue the very Ground, on which he lay proſtrate. Sweet *Jeſus*, who ever heard of ſuch an Agony as this? But what think'ſt thou, my Soul, was the true Cauſe of all this Anguiſh, and of this bitter Agony of thy Saviour? Chiefly theſe three: *Firſt*, A clear View and lively Repreſentation of all that he was to ſuffer during the whole Courſe of his Paſſion: So that all the Ignominies and Torments, that he was afterwards ſucceſſively to go through, were now all at once preſented before the Eyes of his Soul, with all their reſpective Aggravations; by which Means he ſuffered his whole bitter Paſſion twice over, once by the Hands of his Enemies, and another time by his own moſt clear and lively Imagination of all that he had

to

to ſuffer. But why, dear *Jeſus*, theſe additional Agonies? Only thy Love can anſwer me. Another Cauſe that contributed to our Saviour's Anguiſh, was a diſtinct View of all the Sins of the World from the firſt to the laſt; of all the horrid Crimes and Abominations of Mankind, all now laid to his Charge, to be cancel'd by the laſt Drop of his Blood. Ah! how hideous, how frightful were all theſe helliſh Monſters, in the Eyes of our Saviour; who alone had a juſt Notion of their Enormity, by having always before him a clear Sight of the infinite Majeſty offended by them! O Lord, how great a Share had my Sins in this tragical Scene! How much, alas, did they contribute to thy Pains and Grief! A third Cauſe of our Saviour's Agony, was the Knowledge that he had of the little Uſe that the very Chriſtians would make of all his Sufferings; to ſee their Blindneſs and Hardneſs of Heart, by which they would pervert this Antidote into a mortal Poiſon, and tread under their Feet his precious Blood: To ſee the eternal Loſs of ſo many Millions of Souls, for which he was to die; and the ſmall

Number of thoſe, who by the Fruit of his Paſſion and Death would eſcape from everlaſting Death. All theſe ſad and melancholy Thoughts, attacking at once the Soul of our Redeemer, caſt him into that mortal Agony, and forc'd from him thoſe Streams of Blood. Chriſtians, pity now your Saviour's Anguiſh, and reſolve never more to have any hand in afflicting his tender Soul by Sin.

CHAP. XXVI.

On our Saviour in the Court of Caiphas.

The Twenty-ſixth Day.

CONSIDER, *1ſt*, How our Saviour ariſing from his Prayer, having conquered all his Fears, comes to his Diſciples, bidding them now ſleep on and take their reſt, that his Hour was come, and that the Traitor was juſt at hand. But thou, dear Lord, when wilt thou reſt or ſleep? Not till the laſt Sleep of Death on the hard Bed of the Croſs. Contemplate, Chriſtians, with the Eyes of your Souls, the Courage and Readineſs

dineſs to ſuffer for you, which your Saviour ſhews on this Occaſion, by going forth to meet the Traitor and his Band: See with what Meekneſs he receives the treacherous Kiſs of Peace. And yet, to make it evident that no Power upon Earth could take him, but with his own Free-will, with two Words, *Ego ſum*, *I am he*, he ſtruck down the whole Multitude, that was come to apprehend him, making them all reel back and fall to the Ground. After which he delivered himſelf into their Hands: And they having bound him, drag'd him along into the City thro' thick and thin, whilſt his Diſciples all abandoning him run their way, leaving him in the Hands of his Enemies, who preſented him firſt before *Annas*, the Father-in-law of the High-Prieſt, where he was inſulted by a vile Servant, that gave him a Box on the Ear. From thence they led him to the Court of *Caiphas*, where the chief Prieſts and Elders were aſſembled, longing to ſee this new Priſoner before them, and determin'd to make away with him, right or wrong. Follow thou thy Saviour, my Soul, every Step of the Way, aban-

don'd now by all his Friends: Contemplate this meek Lamb in the midſt of theſe ravenous Wolves, loaded with their Scoffs and Inſolences: But carry the Eyes of thy Underſtanding ſtill farther, view the Interior of his Soul, and ſee the Joy and Satisfaction that he takes in complying with his eternal Father's Will, and ſuffering for thee: And learn from hence the like Diſpoſitions in all thy Sufferings.

Conſider, 2*dly*, How our Lord was no ſooner brought to the Court of *Caiphas* the High-Prieſt, where the great Council of the Sanhedrim was aſſembled, but immediately after a ſcornful Welcome they proceed to his Trial, and call-in the falſe Witneſſes, who were to depoſe againſt him. But ſee the Providence of God, ſee the Force of Truth, and the wonderful Innocence of this Lamb of God; notwithſtanding all the Malice of this impious Court, and their Witneſſes; Men of neither Honour nor Conſcience; yet all that they could alledge againſt him was either inſignificant, or they could not agree in their Story, which made their Teſtimonies of no Weight. But whilſt

whilſt thou adoreſt this Providence, ſee and admire the Meekneſs and Patience of thy Saviour, who was ſilent under all the Provocations given by theſe falſe Witneſſes; giving thereby a moſt convincing Proof of his being ſomething more than Man, who could thus calmly hold his Peace, whilſt his Reputation and Life were both attack'd by palpable Calumnies. The Malice of our Saviour's Enemies being thus confounded, the High-Prieſt ariſes, and adjures him by the living God, to tell him if he was the *Chriſt*, the Son of God? In reverence to which adorable Name, our Lord made a ſolemn Confeſſion, and Profeſſion of the Truth, teaching by his Example all his Followers, when call'd to the like Trial, never to be aſhamed of him, nor of his Faith. Upon this, *Caiphas* rends his Garments, crying out *Blaſphemy!* And they all pronounce him *worthy of Death.* But thou, my Soul, on the contrary, cry out with the Angels, and all the Elect of God, *Revel.* 5. v. 12. *The Lamb that was ſlain is worthy to receive Power, and Divinity, and Wiſdom, and Strength, and*

Honour, and Glory, and Benediction, from all Creatures for ever.

Conſider, 3dly, How that unjuſt Sentence againſt our Redeemer was no ſooner pronounced by the great Council, but immediately they all, with unheard-of Barbarity, fell upon him like Furies of Hell, rather than Men, and diſcharg'd upon him all Kind of Injuries, Blows, Affronts and Blaſphemies. See, my Soul, how theſe Hell-hounds ſpit in thy Saviour's Face, and diſgorge their filthy Flegm on that ſacred Forehead, where Beauty and Majeſty ſits: See, how they buffet, kick, and ſtrike him with mercileſs Rage, whilſt he with his Hands tied behind him is not able to ward one Blow, nor has any Friend there to wipe his Face, or afford him any other Help. See, how they cover and muffle up his Face with ſome filthy Clout, and then in Scorn (as if he were a Mock-Prophet, and an Impoſtor) at every Blow they bid him propheſy who it was that ſtruck him. Beſides many other Affronts, which he endured with an invincible Patience and Fortitude.

Conſider,

Conſider, 4*thly*, That of all which our Saviour ſuffer'd in the Court of *Caiphas*, nothing touch'd him ſo much to the quick, as the dangerous Fall of *Peter*, the chief of all his Apoſtles, and who had received the moſt ſignal Favours from him. Who, after having boaſted that very Night, that altho' all the reſt of the Diſciples ſhould abandon their Maſter, he would never forſake him; and that he would ſooner die with him, than deny him: Yet, ſee the Weakneſs and Inconſtancy of human Nature; at the Voice of a ſilly Maid, he forthwith denies his Maſter, repeats this Denial a ſecond and a third time, and even ſwears and damns himſelf, if he ever knew the Man. Sweet *Jeſus!* what is Man? O Lord, look to me, and ſupport me by thy Grace, or I ſhall alſo deny thee. The Cauſes of *Peter*'s Fall were, 1*ſt*, A ſecret Pride, and Preſumption upon his own Strength. 2*dly*, His Neglect of the Admonition of our Saviour, in ſleeping, when he ought to have watch'd and pray'd. 3*dly*, His expoſing himſelf to the Danger, by running into ill Company. See, that the like Cauſes have not

the like Effect in thee, by drawing thee alſo to deny, and even crucify thy Lord by Sin. Learn to imitate the ſpeedy Repentance of this Apoſtle, who immediately after his Fall going out wept bitterly; a Practice, which 'tis ſaid he ever after retain'd, as often as he heard the Cock crow.

Conſider, 5*thly*, How the High-Prieſts and Scribes, after having given Sentence of Death againſt our Saviour, retired to take their Reſt, leaving him in Hands that were not like to ſuffer him to take any Reſt. O! what a Night did our Lord paſs in the midſt of that Rabble, who, to ſatisfy their own Cruelty, and the Malice of their Maſters, acted over and over again all that Scene of Inhumanity, which they had begun whilſt their Maſters were there, loading him with all Kind of Outrages and Blaſphemies. So that we may boldly affirm, that one half of what our Saviour ſuffer'd that Night will not be known till the Day of Judgment. All which Inſolences he bears in Silence, and even then whilſt they are abuſing him, is praying for them, and excuſing them to his Father, and offering up all his Suffering

ing in Atonement for their Sins. Sweet *Jeſus*, give us Grace to imitate thee.

CHAP. XXVII.

Our Saviour is brought before Pilate *and* Herod.

The Twenty-ſeventh DAY.

CONSIDER, *1ſt*, How early in the Morning, notwithſtanding their late ſitting up, the High-Prieſt, and his Fellows in Iniquity, convene a more numerous Aſſembly of the Sanhedrim, and there again put the ſame Queſtion to our Saviour, *Whether he was the Son of God?* And, receiving the ſame Anſwer, confirm their former Sentence. Yet as they did not think it ſafe for themſelves, being Subjects to the *Roman* Empire, to put this Sentence in Execution without the Conſent of *Pontius Pilate* the Governor, they determin'd to carry him to *Pilate*, and by his Authority to have him crucified: A Kind of Execution which their Malice made

made choice of, becauſe it was at the ſame time moſt ignominious, as being only for vile Slaves and notorious Criminals; and moſt cruel, as being a long and lingring Death, under the ſharpeſt and moſt ſenſible Torments. Come now, Chriſtian Soul, and contemplate thy Saviour as he is hurried along the Streets, with his Hands bound, from the Houſe of the High-Prieſt, to the Court of *Pilate*; attended by the whole Council, and their wicked Miniſters; publiſhing aloud as they go, that now all his Impoſtures were laid open, his Hypocriſy diſcover'd, and himſelf convicted of Blaſphemy. See how the giddy Mob, who a little while before reverenced him as a Prophet, now all on a ſudden join with his Enemies, following him with opprobrious Shouts, inſulting him all the Way that he goes, and diſcharging a thouſand Kind of Injuries and Affronts upon him.

Conſider, 2*dly*, And view the Judge of the Living and the Dead, ſtanding with his Hands bound as a Criminal before a petty Governor; and behold the Proceſs. The chief Prieſts and Princes of the People having delivered him up, and

and *Pilate* demanding what Particulars they had to alledge againſt him, they made no Scruple of inventing new Calumnies, that he was a factious and ſeditious Man, a Traitor, and a Rebel to the Government, that forbid Tribute to be paid to *Cæſar*, and ſet himſelf up for King of the *Jews*. Once more take notice of the invincible Patience of thy Saviour, in hearing with Silence ſuch notorious Falſities as they laid to his Charge; ſo that the Governor was aſtoniſh'd that a Man could hold his Peace under ſuch Accuſations, which aim'd at nothing leſs than procuring his Condemnation to the worſt of Deaths. However, as he plainly ſaw through all the Diſguiſe of the High-Prieſts and Scribes, he interpreted this Silence in favour of our Saviour, only boggling a little at the Word *King*; and having receiv'd full Satisfaction upon that head, by being made to underſtand that the Kingdom of our Saviour was not of this World, and therefore not dangerous to *Cæſar*'s Government, he determin'd to ſet him at liberty. Admire the Force of Innocence, which could even move a Heathen, and

one

one of the worſt of Men, ſuch as *Pilate* was; and aſſure thyſelf, that generally ſpeaking, Patience and Silence are a thouſand times better Proofs of thy Innocence, than returning Injury for Injury, and making an opprobrious and clamorous Defence.

Conſider, *3dly*, How *Pilate* being convinced of our Saviour's Innocence, and deſirous of ſetting him at liberty, met with an obſtinate Reſiſtance from the malicious Princes and deluded People; and therefore underſtanding that our Saviour, as being an Inhabitant of *Galilee*, belong'd to the Judiſdiction of *Herod* the Tetrarch of *Galilee*, took Occaſion from thence to rid himſelf of their Importunity, by ſending him to *Herod*. Accompany thy Lord, O my Soul, in this new Stage, and take notice of his incomparable Meekneſs, whilſt he paſſes through the Streets, lined on all ſides with an inſulting Multitude, and ecchoing with their Reproaches and Clamours. *Herod* was moſt glad of his coming, in Hopes to ſee ſome Miracle; and therefore put a thouſand Queſtions to him; whilſt the Princes of the *Jews*, with untired Malice, were repeating

repeating all their falſe Accuſations againſt him: But our Lord was ſilent ſtill, nor would he ſatisfy the idle Curioſity of *Herod*, nor do any Thing by which he might incline this Prince to free him from that Death, which he ſo ardently deſir'd, as being by the Decrees of Heaven the only Means of our Redemption. Bleſſed by all his Creatures be his Goodneſs for ever!

Conſider, 4*thly*, How *Herod*, provoked by our Saviour's not conſenting to gratify his Inclinations of ſeeing a Miracle, ſought to revenge himſelf by treating him with Mockery and Scorn, expoſing him to the Scoffs of all his Guards, and ordering him to be cloath'd in Contempt with a white Garment, as with a Fool's Coat, or perhaps as a Mock-King; and in this Dreſs ſent him back again to *Pilate*, attended in the ſame Manner as he came, with an inſulting Mob headed by the Scribes and Phariſees. Stand amazed, my Soul, to ſee the eternal Wiſdom of the Father treated thus as a Fool; and learn from hence, not to repine, or be ſollicitous about the Judgment of the World.

Conſider,

Conſider, 5*thly*, How *Pilate*, ſeeing our Saviour brought back again to his Tribunal, contrived another way to bring him off, ſo as to give at the ſame time as little Offence as might be to the High-Prieſt, and the Chief of the *Jews*. It was the Cuſtom of that Nation, on the Day of their paſchal Solemnity (which was celebrated that very Day) in Memory of their Delivery from the *Egyptian* Bondage, to have one Criminal ſet at liberty, whom the People ſhould petition for: Werefore *Pilate*, taking his Advantage of this Opportunity, propoſed to their Choice our Saviour on one hand, and *Barabbas*, a notorious Malefactor, Robber and Murderer, on the other; making ſure that they would rather chuſe to have the innocent Lamb of God releaſed, than *Barabbas*, the worſt of Criminals, eſcape due Puniſhment. Ah! *Pilate*, what an outrageous Affront doſt thou here put upon the Son of God, whilſt thou pretendeſt to favour him? What! muſt the Lord of Life and Immortality, the King of Heaven, ſtand in competition with the vileſt of Men, with the moſt notorious Criminal that could

could be pitch'd upon? Muſt it be put to the Votes of the Mob, which of the two is the better Man, and which the more worthy of Death? O the unparallel'd Injury! O the unparallel'd Humility of my Saviour! O King of Glory, how low haſt thou ſtoop'd to raiſe me up from the Dunghil?

Conſider, 6*thly*, If it was an intolerable Affront to compare our Saviour with *Barabbas*, what Idea muſt we frame, or what Name muſt we give to that blind People's Choice, when they preferr'd *Barabbas* to *Chriſt*, and deſired that the latter might be crucified, and the former acquitted. O! ſee, my Soul, in this wonderful Humiliation of thy Lord, how deep, how dangerous was the Wound of Pride, which could not be cured but by ſuch and ſo great Humility: O! ſee if thine be yet cured. Examine alſo thyſelf, if thou haſt not often been guilty, like theſe blind *Jews*, of preferring *Barabbas* to thy Saviour; by turning thy back to him for ſome petty Intereſt, or filthy Pleaſure? If ſo, thou art more inexcuſable than they, becauſe thou knoweſt him to be the Lord of Glory, at the

ſame

ſame time as thou perſecuteſt him by Sin: Whereas, if they had known him to be ſo, they would never have prefer'd a *Barabbas* before him.

CHAP. XXVIII.

Our Saviour is ſcourg'd at the Pillar, and crown'd with Thorns.

The Twenty-eighth DAY.

CONSIDER, *1ſt*, How the *Jews* ſtill continuing to cry out againſt our Lord, and in a tumultuous Manner to demand his Crucifixion, *Pilate* takes another Way to bring about his being ſet at liberty, which was by ſtriving to ſatisfy their Cruelty, in ordering him to be moſt ſeverely ſcourg'd. O! *Pilate*, how cruel is thy Mercy! Is it thus, that thou treateſt him whom thou declareſt innocent? Is this thy Juſtice? But our Sins, O my Soul, requir'd that the Lord of Glory ſhould be thus cruelly handled, and ſubjected to this ignominious Puniſhment, to which none but common Slaves, or the meaneſt Wretches

Wretches were liable, and to which a *Roman* Citizen could upon no account be condemn'd. Stand thou, and ſee, my Soul, in what Manner this Sentence is executed. See how the bloody Soldiers lay Hands on this Lamb of God, how they ſtrip him of all his Cloaths, and tie him faſt to a ſtony Pillar: See how they diſcharge upon his ſacred Back and Shoulders innumerable Stripes, Laſhes and Scourges; ſee how the Blood comes ſpouting forth on all Sides; ſee how his Body is all rent and mangled by their Cruelty, and the Fleſh laid open to the very Bones: See how his Enemies are all the while inſulting over him, and rejoicing at his Torments; whilſt he, with his Eyes caſt up towards Heaven, is offering up all that he ſuffers for their Sins, and for thoſe of the whole World. Ah! Sinners, take a ſerious View of your Redeemer now, and ſee in his torn and mangled Body the Malice of Sin; and learn to deteſt this helliſh Monſter, which has brought the Son of God to all theſe Sufferings.

Conſider, 2*dly*, How theſe bloody Ruffians having by this cruel ſcourging made

our

our Saviour's Body one Wound from Head to Foot, looſe him at laſt from the Pillar, leaving him to help himſelf on with his Cloaths as well as he can. Ah! Chriſtians, pity now your Saviour's abandon'd Condition; who has no one to lend him a helping Hand to bind up his gaping Wounds, or ſtanch the Blood that comes flowing from them: O preſent yourſelves now, and offer him what Service you are able: Offer at leaſt to aſſiſt him in putting on his Cloaths to cover his green Wounds from the cold Air. But Oh! how rough are theſe woollen Cloaths to his wounded Back! Alas! inſtead of affording him any Eaſe or Comfort, they do but increaſe his Sores, by their rubbing upon them.

Conſider, 3*dly*, How the bloody Soldiers had ſcarce given our Saviour a ſhort Reſpite after his ſcourging, when they were puſh'd on by the Devil to act another Scene of Cruelty, ſuch as never was heard of before or ſince: And that was, to make themſelves a barba ous Sport, in crowning him for a King. Therefore they drag him into the Court of the *Prætorium*, and aſſemble together the whole Regiment;

Regiment; then violently ſtrip him again of all his Cloaths, which now began to cleave to his wounded Body; ſet him on a Bench or Stool, throw about him ſome old ragged purple Garment, twiſt a Wreath of long hard and ſharp Thorns, and preſs it down on his ſacred Head, put in his Hand for a Scepter a Reed or Cane: Then in Deriſion, coming one by one, they bend their Knees before him, with a ſcornful Salutation, *Hail, King of the Jews*; they ſpit in his Face, buffet him, and taking the Reed or Cane out of his Hand ſtrike him with it on the Head, ſo driving the Thorns deeper in, whilſt the Blood trickles down apace from the many Wounds which he receives from their Points. Sweet *Jeſus*, what ſhall we here ſay, or which ſhall we moſt admire; the Malice of theſe Miniſters of Satan, or thy unparallel'd Charity, which made thee undergo ſuch unheard-of Reproaches and Torments for ungrateful Sinners? Bleſſed be thy Goodneſs for ever.

Conſider, 4*thly*, How *Pilate*, hoping now, that the Rage and Malice of the *Jews* would be ſatisfied, ſo as to inſiſt no longer upon our Saviour's Death, after they

they ſhould ſee with how much Cruelty and Contempt he had been treated in compliance to their Fury, leads him forth as he was, with his Crown of Thorns on his Head, and his ragged Purple on his Shoulders; and from an Eminence, ſhews him to the People with an *Ecce homo*, *Behold the Man.* Behold in what Manner he has now been handled, ceaſe then to ſeek his Death any longer. Let his Body mangled from Head to Foot beſpeak your Pity. But thou, Chriſtian Soul, *behold the Man* with other Kind of Eyes than theſe hard hearted Wretches. And ſee to what a Condition thy Sins, and his own infinite Charity have reduced him. Behold his Head crown'd with a Wreath of ſharp Thorns, piercing on all Sides his ſacred Fleſh, and entring into his Temples with exceſſive Pain. Behold his Face quite disfigured with blacks and blues, and all beſmear'd with Spittle and Blood. Behold his whole Body inhumanly rent and torn with Whips and Scourges; and now covered with a hard ragged Garment, rubbing and at each Moment increaſing his Wounds: And then look up, and contemplate him upon his Throne of Glory,

Glory, and ſee what Return thou canſt make him for having thus annihilated himſelf for the Love of thee. He deſires no more of thee than an Imitation of his Patience and Humility: See, then, in what Manner thou art to practiſe theſe Leſſons.

CHAP. XXIX.

Our Saviour carries his Croſs, and is nail'd to it.

The Twenty-ninth DAY.

CONSIDER, *1ſt*, How the Malice of the *Jews* no ways relenting at the Sight of the Lamb of God bleeding for the Sins of the World, but continuing ſtill in a tumultuous Manner to demand that he might be crucified, *Pilate* at laſt yields to their Importunity, and againſt his own Conſcience ſentences our Saviour to the Death of the Croſs. Ah! Chriſtains, has it never been your Misfortune by the like Cowardice to condemn your Saviour and his Doctrine, and baſely to renounce in the Practice of your Lives

the Maxims of his Goſpel, for fear of what the World will ſay? Has not too often a much weaker Temptation, than the Fear of loſing *Cæſar*'s Friendſhip, induced you to crucify again the Son of God? Be confounded, and repent.

Conſider, 2*dly*, How this Sentence of Death, how unjuſt ſoever from *Pilate*, yet as being moſt juſt from his eternal Father, and neceſſary for our Salvation, was received with perfect Submiſſion, Charity and Silence, by our Redeemer. Who thereupon was immediately ſtrip'd again of his purple Garment, and clad with his own Cloaths; and a heavy Croſs, of Length and Bigneſs proportionable to the bearing a Man, was laid on his wounded Shoulders: And two Thieves or High-way Robbers were appointed to bear him Company, and to be executed with him: To verify that Prophecy, *with the wicked he was reputed*, Iſai. 53. Come now, devout Souls, and take a view of your Lord in this his laſt Progreſs or Proceſſion. A Crier leads the Way, publiſhing aloud the pretended Crimes and Blaſphemies of this never heard-of Malefactor: Then follow the Soldiers and Executioners with Ropes,

Ropes, Hammers, Nails, *&c.* After whom goeth, or rather creepeth along, our High-Prieſt and Victim, all bruiſed and bloody, with a Thief on each Hand, and the Croſs on his Shoulders, dragging it forward Step by Step; follow'd and ſurrounded on all ſides by the Prieſts, the Scribes, and the whole Mob of the People, curſing, reviling, and ſcoffing at him: Whilſt the cruel Hangmen are haſtening him forward with their Kicks and Blows. Ah! Chriſtians, now at leaſt take pity of your Saviour's Sufferings, and add not to his Load by Sin.

Conſider, 3*dly*, How our bleſſed Lord having for ſome time, with unſpeakable Labour and Torment, carried his Croſs through the Streets, at laſt falleth down under the Weight, unable to carry it any farther. Wonder not, my Soul, at this, ſince beſides the Load of the Croſs oppreſſing his wearied Body, wounded in every Part, and exhauſted by the Loſs of ſo much Blood, his heavenly Father has laid upon his Shoulders another more inſupportable Weight, *viz.* that of the Sins of the whole World. Ah! Chriſtians, 'tis under this intolerable Burthen that your Saviour faints and falls down. Nor

Nor is he any way eaſed of this mercileſs Load by *Simon* of *Cyrene*, who was compell'd to take up the Croſs, but bore no Part of the Weight of our Iniquities; all which the heavenly Father laid upon his beloved Son, to be cancel'd with his Blood and Death. O infinite Goodneſs of the Father! O infinite Charity of the Son! to do and ſuffer ſo much for wretched Man. O my Soul, ſee thou never more be ungrateful to ſo loving a God.

Conſider, 4*thly*, How our Saviour being now arrived on Mount *Calvary*, quite wearied and ſpent, the Miniſters of Hell ſtill perſecute him with unwearied Cruelty: And whereas it was the Cuſtom to give to the Criminals that were to die a ſtrengthening Draught of Wine ſeaſon'd with Myrrh, they contrived to mingle Gall with the Portion deſign'd for him. After which, they violently ſtrip him of his Cloaths, which by this Time cleav'd faſt to his Sores, opening again all his Wounds, and expoſing him naked to Shame and Cold in the Sight of an immenſe Multitude. Draw nigh now, my Soul, and ſee him bleeding afreſh for the Love of thee. O ſee how, while the Croſs

Croſs is preparing, he falls upon his Knees, and offers himſelf to his Eternal Father a bleeding Victim for to appeaſe his Wrath enkindled by thy Sins.

Conſider, 5*thly*, How the Croſs lying flat on the Ground, they lay our dear Redeemer ſtretched out upon it, who like a meek Lamb makes no Reſiſtance. And firſt drawing his Right-hand to the Place deſigned to fix it on, they drive with their Hammers a ſharp groſs Nail through the Palm of his Hand, forcing its Way with incredible Torment through the Sinews, Veins, Muſcles and Bones, of which the Hand is compoſed, into the hard Wood of the Croſs: In the mean time the whole Body, to favour that Wound and the pierced Sinews, was naturally drawn towards the Right-ſide, but was not long permitted to remain ſo; for immediately theſe cruel Butchers laying hold of his other Arm, and Hand, violently drag him towards the Left-ſide, in order to nail that Hand alſo to the Place deſign'd for it. Then pulling down his Legs, they faſten his ſacred Feet in like manner with Nails to the Wood: And all this with ſuch violent Cruelty, that 'tis thought with ſtretch-

ing and pulling they very much ſtrain'd his whole Body, and diſjointed it in many Parts, according to that of the royal Prophet; *They have dug my Hands and Feet; they have numbered all my Bones*, Pſ. 21. Ah! Chriſtians, if the contracting or piercing of any one Nerve or Sinew; if the diſjointing or diſplacing of any one Bone never ſo ſmall be ſo cruel a Torture; what muſt we think of the Torments which our Saviour endured in his diſjointed Body! What muſt we think of what he ſuffer'd, when his Hands and Feet, where ſo many Sinews, Muſcles, Veins and Bones all meet, were violently bored through with groſs Nails? O! let us never forget his Sufferings: O! let us never ceaſe to admire, adore, and love his Mercy.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXX.

Our Saviour on the Croſs.

The Thirtieth DAY.

CONSIDER, *1ſt*, How the bloody Executioners, having now nail'd our Saviour faſt to the Croſs, begin with Ropes to raiſe him up into the Air. O! what Shouts did his Enemies now make, when he appear'd above the People's Heads? With what Blaſphemies did they ſalute him? whilſt his moſt afflicted Mother, and other devout Friends are pierced to the Heart at the Sight. At length they let the Foot of the Croſs fall into the Hole prepared for it, with a Jolt, by which our Saviour's mangled Body was not a little injured, and the Wounds of his Hands and Feet widen'd. And thus he now hangs pois'd in the Air in moſt dreadful Pangs and Torments, the whole Weight of his Body ſuſtain'd by his pierced Hands and Feet, by which his Wounds are continually increaſed: No Place to reſt his Head on, but upon Thorns; no other Bed for his wearied and wounded Body, but the hard Wood of the Croſs.

Conſider,

Conſider, 2*dly*, The infinite Charity of our Saviour, and the unparallel'd Malice of his Enemies. He amidſt his Torments cries out, *Father forgive them, for they know not what they are doing.* They grin and ſhake their Heads at him, ſaying, *Vah! Thou that deſtroyeſt the Temple of God, and canſt rebuild it again in three Days, ſave now thyſelf. If thou art the Son of God, come down from the Croſs:* With a thouſand other Reproaches and Blaſphemies, with which he is loaded, not only by the common People and Soldiers, but alſo by the chief Prieſts, Scribes, and Elders; which he hears, and bears in Patience and Silence. But O! who can tell us the interior Employment of his bleſſed Soul all this while that he hangs upon the Croſs? His Thoughts of Peace towards us, his Prayers for us, the Anguiſh and dreadful Agonies of the inferior Part of his Soul, and the inexpreſſible Joy in the ſupreme Part thereof, in the Glory of his Father, which was to ariſe from that plentiful Redemption, which he was then imparting to poor Sinners.

Conſider, 3*dly*, The Part that the bleſſed Virgin-Mother bore in the Sufferings of her Son: And how truly here was verified that

that Prophecy of old *Simeon*, *That the Sword ſhould pierce her very Soul.* O! how killing a Grief muſt have oppreſſed this moſt tender, and moſt loving of all Mothers, when during the whole Courſe of the Paſſion of her deareſt Son, whom ſhe loved with an incomparable Love, ſhe was an Eye-Witneſs to all the Injuries, Outrages and Torments that he endured. Ah! bleſſed Lady, may we not truly ſay, that the Whips, Thorns and Nails, that pierced thy Son's Fleſh, made as deep a Wound in thy Virgin Heart; and that nothing but a Miracle could have ſupported thy Life under ſuch Exceſs of Pain? But O! what a deep Wound didſt thou feel in thy Soul, when thy dying Son recommended thee to his beloved Diſciple St. *John*; giving to thee the Son of *Zebedee* in exchange for the Son of God? Bleſſed Virgin, we gladly acknowledge thee for our Mother, bequeath'd to us all in the Perſon of St. *John*: O! by all thy Sufferings, remember us poor baniſh'd Children of *Eve*, before the Throne of Grace! Chriſtians, learn the admirable Leſſons which your Lady teaches you at the Foot of the Croſs; learn her unſhaken Faith, and undoubted Hope;

learn

learn her perfect Reſignation, Patience and Fortitude. O! learn from her to love *Jeſus*, and deteſt Sin, the true Cauſe of all his Sufferings.

Conſider, 4*thly*, How all Things ſeem now to have conſpired againſt our deareſt Lord. His Father has forſaken him: His Mother's Preſence and Grief pierce him to the Heart. As for his own Apoſtles, one of them has betray'd him; another has denied him; all have abandon'd him: His Friends, and thoſe whom he had moſt favour'd, and miraculouſly cured, now either join with his Perſecutors, or at leaſt are aſhamed of him: His Enemies triumph and inſult over him. His own Body by its Weight is a Torment to him. But what moſt of all afflicts him, is to ſee the Ingratitude of Chriſtians, the little Benefit they will make of his Death and Paſſion, and the eternal Loſs of ſo many Souls redeem'd by his precious Blood. Ah! ſweet *Jeſus*, ſuffer me not to be one of that unhappy Number: Suffer me not to be ſo miſerable, as to join with thy Enemies in crucifying thee by Sin!

Conſider, 5*thly*, The Leſſons that our Saviour gives us by his laſt Words upon the

the Croſs. 1*ſt*, Of perfect Love and Charity to his Enemies, by praying for them, and excuſing them to his eternal Father: *Father forgive them, for they know not what they do.* O let us learn from our dying Redeemer this neceſſary Leſſon, to love and pray for thoſe that hate and perſecute us; and inſtead of aggravating their Crime, to excuſe it, and impute it to their Ignorance: O! how true is it of every Sinner, *he knows not what he is doing:* Otherwiſe he would never dare to fly in the Face of infinite Majeſty; he would never be ſo mad as to renounce Heaven for a Trifle, and caſt himſelf down the Precipice that leads to Hell. 2*dly*, Learn the Efficacy of a ſincere Converſion, and an humble Confeſſion of Sins, in the plenary Indulgence given by our dying Saviour to the good Thief. *Amen I ſay unto thee, this Day thou ſhalt be with me in Paradiſe.* 3*dly*, Learn a filial Devotion to the Virgin-Mother, recommended to us all by her Son, in the Perſon St. *John*, *Behold thy Mother.* 4*thly*, Learn the Greatneſs of the interior Anguiſh of thy Saviour's Soul from thoſe Words, *My God, My God, why haſt thou forſaken me?* Alas!

it

it was for no other Reaſon, but that poor ſinful Man might not be forſaken. 5*thly*, From that Word of thy crucified *Jeſus*, *I thirſt*, take notice of two violent Thirſts, which thy Saviour endured upon the Croſs; the one corporal, proceeding from his having faſted ſo long, paſſed through ſo many Torments, and ſhed ſo much Blood; the other ſpiritual in his Soul, by the vehement Deſire of our Good and Salvation. But O! cruel Wretches, who would give him nothing but Vinegar to quench his corporal Thirſt! More cruel Sinners, who inſtead of ſatisfying his ſpiritual Thirſt by Gratitude and Devotion, give him nothing but the Gall and Vinegar of Sin and Wickedneſs! 6*thly*, From theſe Words of our dying Saviour, *it is conſummated*, learn to rejoice that the whole Work of Man's Redemption is now perfected; that the Figures and Prophecies of the Law are all fulfill'd; and the Hand-writing that ſtood againſt us is now compleatly cancel'd by the Blood of our Redeemer. 7*thly*, From thoſe laſt Words of our expiring Lord, *Father*, *into thy Hands I commend my Spirit*, learn both in Life and Death to commit thyſelf wholly to thy God. Happy

py they, that ſtudy well theſe Leſſons, which their great Maſter teaches them from the Chair of his Croſs!

CHAP. XXXI.

On the Death of our Saviour.

The Thirty-firſt DAY.

CONSIDER, 1*ſt*, How our Lord having ſpoken thoſe laſt Words, *Father, into thy Hands I commend my Spirit*, with a loud and ſtrong Voice; leaning down his Head in perfect Submiſſion to his Father's Will, and perfect Charity to us poor Sinners, to whom in this Poſture he offer'd as it were the Kiſs of Peace, breath'd forth his pure Soul, and thus ended his mortal Life; which, from the very firſt Moment, till now, had been nothing elſe but a Series of Sufferings endured for us. Run in now, my Soul, and approach boldly to thy Redeemer, kiſs his ſacred Feet, view his pale Limbs, count at leiſure all his Wounds, and lament thy Sins, for which he ſuffer'd them all.

Conſider, 2*dly*, In the Paſſion of our Saviour, the Truth of thoſe Words, which

he himſelf deliver'd upon another Occaſion, *He that ſhall humble himſelf ſhall be exalted:* And ſee how our Lord, having humbled himſelf to the Death of the Croſs, was even at that very time honour'd and exalted by his heavenly Father, and that many ways. For during the Time that he was upon the Croſs, the Sun for three whole Hours withdrew his Light; and at his Death the Earth trembled, the Rocks were ſplit, and the Monuments were open'd: The Veil of the Temple, which hung before the Sanctuary, was rent from top to bottom; the People touch'd with theſe Wonders went home knocking their Breaſts; and the Centurion, or Captain of the Guards, publickly profeſſed, that this Man, whom they had crucified, was truly the Son of God. Rejoice, Chriſtian Soul, to ſee thy Saviour's Death thus honour'd; and learn under all Events to confide in God, who will make all the Malice of thy Enemies turn at laſt to thy Honour and Advantage. Sit now down at the Foot of the Croſs, and there at leiſure,

Conſider, 3*dly*, And repeat in thy Mind the Multitude and vaſt Variety of Sufferings, which thy Saviour has endured for

for thee, from his Entrance into the Garden of *Gethſemani*, till his expiring on the Croſs. View them one by one, and thou ſhalt ſee that not one Part of his ſacred Body (which being the moſt perfect, was at the ſame time the moſt tender and moſt ſenſible of Pain of any that ever has been) was free from its peculiar Torment. His Head was crown'd with Thorns; his *Face* defiled with Spittle, all bruiſed, and black and blue with Blows; his *Hair* and *Beard* pluck'd and torn; his *Mouth* drench'd with Gall and Vinegar; his Shoulders oppreſſed with the Weight of the Croſs; his Hands and Feet pierced with Nails; his whole Body exhauſted with a bloody Sweat; mangled and laid open with Whips and Scourges; his Limbs wearied out, and all disjointed upon the Croſs. What he ſuffer'd in his Soul was not one Jot leſs, but rather infinitely more, than what he ſuffer'd in his Body. Witneſs, that mortal Anguiſh which caſt him into his Agony in the Garden; witneſs, that grievous Complaint on the Croſs, *My God, My God, why haſt thou forſaken me?* He ſuffer'd moreover in his Reputation (which is often dearer to a Man than Life) by falſe Wit-

neſſes, and outrageous Calumnies and Impoſitions: He ſuffer'd in his Honour by all Kind of Reproaches and Affronts: He ſuffer'd in his Goods, being deſpoil'd of his very Cloaths, and hanging naked upon the Croſs: He ſuffer'd in his Friends, being forſaken by them all: Not to ſpeak of other Sufferings, which are uſually moſt ſenſible to Fleſh and Blood, *viz.* the Ingratitude of thoſe whom he had favour'd with his Miracles, the Triumphs of his Enemies, their Inſults over his Diſciples, *&c.* And in all thoſe Sufferings, he denied himſelf thoſe Comforts which he uſually affords his Servants under their Croſſes, and which have made the greateſt Torments of the Martyrs not only tolerable, but oftentimes ſweet and comfortable. But he would allow himſelf no other Comfort, but that of doing the Will of his Father, and purchaſing our Redemption.

Conſider, 4*thly*, Who it is that ſuffers all this; and thou ſhalt find that he is the eternal Son of God; equal and conſubſtantial to his Father; the great Lord, and Maker of Heaven and Earth, infinite in Power, infinite in Wiſdom, infinite in all Perfections.

Perfections. But for whom does he ſuffer all this? For poor Man, a wretched Worm of the Earth; for ungrateful Sinners, Traytors to his eternal Father, and to himſelf; for thoſe very *Jews*, that crucified him; for us Mortals, who for the moſt part were never like to thank him, or even ſo much as think of his Sufferings. O! how admirable art thou, O Lord, in all thy Ways, but in none more than in the Contrivances of thy Mercy! O! how does this Paſſion of our Redeemer ſet out, and illuſtrate all the Attributes of God! 'Tis here we diſcover his infinite Goodneſs and Charity, in thus wonderfully communicating himſelf to us, and laying down his own Life for us. 'Tis here we diſcover his unparallel'd Mercy, in taking upon himſelf our Miſeries, and enduring the Stripes due to our Sins. Here we ſee the admirable Wiſdom of his Providence, in opening to us, by his own Death, the Fountains of Life. Here we learn to fear his Juſtice, which fell ſo heavy upon his own Son, who had but cloath'd himſelf in the Reſemblance of a Sinner, in order to make Atonement for our Sins. O! what muſt the Guilty themſelves one Day

expect at his Hands, if they don't prevent the Terrors of his Juſtice, by laying hold of his preſent Mercy?

Conſider, 5*thly*, In the Sufferings of thy Saviour the infinite Malice, the unparallel'd Heinouſneſs of mortal Sin, which was not to be cancel'd, but by the laſt Drop of Blood of the Son of God. This is one of the chief Leſſons, which thy Saviour deſires to read thee from the Croſs; thou canſt not pleaſe him better, than by ſtudying well this great Leſſon. O! never be ſo ungrateful, as to crucify him again by mortal Sin. O! let not that Monſter live in thee, for the deſtroying of which, *Chriſt* himſelf would die.

Rules

Rules of a Chriſtian Life,

To be obſerved by all that deſire to ſecure to themſelves a happy Eternity.

1. SEttle in thy Soul a firm Reſolution upon no account whatever to conſent to mortal Sin. This Reſolution is the very Foundation of a virtuous Life: Whoſoever is not arrived thus far, has not yet begun to ſerve God. Without this Reſolution, 'tis in vain for any one to flatter himſelf with the Hopes of living holily, or dying happily.

2. In order to enable thyſelf to keep this Reſolution, be diligent in flying all dangerous Occaſions, ſuch as bad Company, lewd or profane Books, immodeſt Plays, *&c. For he that loves the Danger, ſhall periſh in it*, Eccl. 3. v. 27.

3. Watch all the Motions of thy Heart, and reſiſt the firſt Impreſſions of Evil; keep a guard upon thy Senſes and thy Imagination, that the Enemy may not ſurpriſe thy Soul by theſe Avenues. Contemn not ſmall Faults, leſt by degrees thou fall into greater.

4. Fly

4. Fly an idle Life, as the Mother of all Miſchief, and take it for a certain Truth, that an idle Life will never bring a Chriſtian to Heaven.

5. Never omit upon any account thy Morning and Evening Prayers. In the Morning remember always to preſent to God the firſt Fruits of the Day, by giving him thy firſt Thoughts: Make an Offering to him of all the Actions of the Day; and renew this Oblation at the Beginning of every Thing thou doeſt. *Whether you eat or drink*, ſays St. *Paul*, 1 Cor. 10. v. 31. *or whatever elſe you do, do all for the Glory of God.*

6. In thy Evening Prayers, make a daily Examination of thy Conſcience, calling thyſelf to an account how thou haſt paſſed the Day; and whatever Sins thou diſcovereſt, labour to waſh them away by penitential Tears, before thou layeſt thyſelf down to ſleep. Who knows but that Night may be thy laſt? In going to Bed, think on the Grave; compoſe thyſelf to reſt in the Arms of thy God; and, if thou wake in the Night, raiſe thy Thoughts to him, who is always watching over thee.

7. Beſides

7. Beſides thy Morning and Evening Devotions, ſet aſide ſome Time in the Day for Prayer, more particularly *Mental*, by an interior Converſation of thy Soul with God, her only true and ſoveraign Good. In the midſt of all thy Employments, keep thyſelf as much as poſſible in the Preſence of God, and frequently aſpire to him by ſhort Ejaculations. Read often ſpiritual Books, as Letters or Meſſages ſent thee from Heaven. And, if thy Circumſtances permit, aſſiſt daily at the Sacrifice of the Maſs.

8. Frequent the Sacraments at leaſt once a Month, and take ſpecial Care to prepare thyſelf to receive them worthily.

9. Have a great Devotion to the Paſſion of *Chriſt*; and often meditate upon his Sufferings.

10. Be particularly devout to his bleſſed Mother; take her for thy Mother, and ſeek upon all Occaſions her Protection and Prayers: But learn withal to imitate her Virtues.

11. Study to find out thy predominant Paſſion, and labour with all thy Power to root it out.

12. Let

12. Let not a Day paſs without offering to God ſome Acts of Contrition for thy paſt Sins: And ſtrive to maintain in thy Soul a penitential Spirit.

13. Beware of Self-love as thy greateſt Enemy: And often uſe Violence to thyſelf by Self-denials and Mortifications: Remember the Kingdom of Heaven is not to be taken, but by Violence, St. *Mat.* 11. v. 12.

14. Give Alms according to thy Ability. *For Judgment without Mercy to him that has not ſhewed Mercy*, St. *James* 2. v. 13. Set a great Value upon ſpiritual Alms-deeds, by ſtriving all thou canſt to reclaim unhappy Sinners; and for that end daily bewail their Miſery in the Sight of thy God.

15. Be exact in all the Duties of thy Calling, as being to give an Account one Day to that great Maſter, who has allotted to each one of us our reſpective Station in his Family.

16. *Remember* always *thy laſt Things, and thou ſhalt never ſin*, Eccl. 7.

A T A-

A

TABLE

OF THE

CHAPTERS.

ON the Neceſſity of Conſideration. Chap. 1 Page 5

On the End of our Creation. c. 2 p. 10

On the Benefits of God. c. 3 p. 15

On the Dignity and Obligations of a Chriſtian. c. 4 p. 20

On the Vanity of the World. c. 5 p. 25

On the Happineſs of ſerving God. c. 6 p. 30

On Death. c. 7 p. 34

On the Sentiments we ſhall have at the Hour of our Death. c. 8 p. 40

On the particular Judgment after Death. c. 9 p. 46

On the great accounting Day. c. 10 p. 52

On the general Judgment. c. 11 p. 57

On the laſt Sentence of the Good and Bad. c. 12 p. 63

On Hell. c. 13 p. 69

On the exterior Pains of Hell. c. 14 p. 75

On the interior Pains of Hell. c. 15 p. 82

On

On a miſerable Eternity. c. 16 p. 88
On Heaven. c. 17 p. 93
On the ſmall Number of the Elect. c. 18 p. 100
On mortal Sin. c. 19 p. 108
On the relapſing Sinner. c. 20 p. 113
On doing Penance for our Sins. c. 21 p. 119
Againſt Delay of Repentance. c. 22. p. 126
On Time and Eternity. c. 23 p. 132
On the Preſence of God. c. 24 p. 137
On the Paſſion of Chriſt: *And firſt, of our Saviour in the Garden of* Gethſemani. c. 25 p. 143
On our Saviour in the Court of Caiphas. c. 26 p. 150
Our Saviour is brought before Pilate *and* Herod. c. 27 p. 157
Our Saviour is ſcourg'd at the Pillar, and crown'd with Thorns. c. 28 p. 164
Our Saviour carries his Croſs, and is nail'd to it. c. 29 p. 169
Our Saviour on the Croſs. c. 30 p. 175
On the Death of our Saviour. c. 31 p. 181
Rules of a Chriſtian Life, to be obſerved by all that deſire to ſecure to themſelves a happy Eternity. p. 187.

F I N I S.

BM